

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL



JUNE 1956
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Illustrations by Ridgway.

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*The Editor, Chambers's Journal, 11 Thistle Street, Edinburgh 2.**

Manuscripts cannot be returned unless accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope or by stamps or their equivalent (postal order or imperial or international reply coupon).

Annual subscription, including postage: home, 28/-; abroad, 26/6 (except Canada, 26/-).

Registered for transmission by Canadian Magazine Post.

Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, LTD., 11 Thistle Street, Edinburgh 2, and 6 Dean Street, London, W.1.

Agents for Advertisements:

England—T. B. BROWNE, LTD., 117 Piccadilly, London, W.1;

Scotland—R. D. GLENFIELD, 7 Falcon Avenue, Edinburgh, 10.

CHAMBERS'S DICTIONARY CROSSWORD No. 22 (May)

SOLUTION

Across : 5, Enmesh ; 8, Oklahoma ; 9, Alkali ; 10, Atalanta ; 11, Pickwick ; 12, Flan ; 14, Bee ; 15, Ledger ; 16, Separate ; 19, Trespass ; 23, Tandem ; 26, Hoe ; 27, Asps ; 28, Usual way ; 29, Lacerate ; 31, Molest ; 32, Cold taps ; 33, Teaser.

Down : 1, Skittle ; 2, Darling ; 3, Horn ; 4, Canapes ; 5, Emancipate ; 6, Make war ; 7, Solicit ; 12, Flit ; 13, Adze ; 14, Breakwater ; 17, Adds ; 18, Elms ; 20, Restore ; 21, Stamens ; 22, Shylock ; 24, Narrate ; 25, Epitaph ; 30, Cult.

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Crossword



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The Town of Two Tuesdays

ALUN LLEWELLYN

FOR stubbornness (said the Poacher) there's few who could come up to Morgan Lone-Marsh, since a man more set in his opinion of himself and the world was never born. Yet his stubbornness was not that of temper or pride, but pure and simple faith. And if you doubt whether in fact, as we are told, faith can move mountains, you shall see how he could move something more intractable than they.

I have to admit it was me that started it, going as I did to the empty moors high above Lone Marsh farm, to fish. And to fish on a Sunday. I will not discuss the rights and wrongs of it; so it was, and the day a day made for fishing and the sky meditating above me, and the streams going through the peat with a note of hymns in them as they sang about the stones, and all the place wide and a thousand feet above the world. So that for me, sharing quiet with the morning, it was peace with all men and great persuasion of the rightness of things—which may be the nearest a man like me can ever get to the sense of salvation.

Nor had the fish much to complain of, since I had not a bite all morning, and I was

content to sit in hope and they to swim without yielding to appetite or temptation, with what was, no doubt, considerable satisfaction to both sides.

Indeed, I must have dozed a little, for all of a sudden I found Morgan standing over me and his shadow across my shoulder. And me knowing his morals to be what they were, it was a darker shadow he cast than any, and the wind blew chill with it and the sun drew a cloud across his face as if he hid his eyes from the sight of our encountering.

There were few words Morgan Lone-Marsh had at any time, and he used few then. 'Fishing?' he asked, quiet as thunder a long way off. 'On the Lord's Day?'

He used, I say, few words at any time, but when he did, they spoke a number of volumes, and all of them Prophets and Revelations. I am not without words myself, as from time to time others are forced to admit. Yet there were none I could find applicable to my tongue for answer. It was not that I was entirely conscious of transgression, though the operations of conscience are such that I felt myself

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no more than ten years old, and ten years mispent, at that. It was not that I wished to deny the fact, being usually one who, if he poaches, does so as a matter of principle and believing that natural justice is a loftier thing than magistrates. But there was sorrow on Morgan's face more than anger, and it was a sorrow from which I felt I must save him. He was a man, you see, who believed in right and wrong, and the way for such is hard in the world and it is decency to offer them comfort. 'The Lord's Day?' said I after a while, surprised and innocent. 'Indeed, Morgan bach, you are beforehand with yourself. This is Saturday.'

With shame I recount it; but the point of the tale would be lost if the facts I do not tell as they took place. Let me underline, for what excuse it may lend me, that I spoke not in fear of Morgan's judgment or any man's, but simply to give his spirit rest from the burden of thinking that the day was defiled and me a soul destined for damnation. It was all the safer that I knew Morgan to be a man of such simplicity of structure that, although he was clearly on his way to chapel, it would not be a chapel of any congregation, for he lived alone in the last of the farmsteads left upon these empty hills, an old man outliving his generation. And the chapel was an ancient one built among the boulders of the mountain moors, and built of them, too, like any shepherd's bothy. It was the holiest of places for him and sanctified in its use by his forebears and kinsmen time out of mind. So he went to it, regular, and made his meditations and read the Book and addressed sermons of considerable wrath and tears to himself and himself alone. What is more, he kept it in repair with his own hands, which as a work of piety and humility exceeds any example I know elsewhere. Among us, he was a famous man and, like most famous men, held to be not altogether of this life.

He put a hand on his chin, for he was fresh shaved, and I could see he was considering that, if what I said was true, he would have to shave again on the morrow. Then he looked at me with wide eyes that had no depth of guile in them, from above his stiff white collar and under his bowler-hat. 'Man,' he said, 'to my mind it is Sunday. Yet it would be unjust to think you would deceive me for no reason, and sinful to insist on the rightness of my own judgment. Do you tell me it is Saturday still?'

There was nothing for it but to nod my head and say it was so. 'It is Saturday,' I said. 'You have not overslept—you have got up too early, Morgan bach.'

At this he looked at his big gold watch and drew his eyebrows together. 'I live too much alone,' he said. 'And growing old am I. Well, I thank you for correcting me.' He looked at his watch again, and I saw that it stayed at *amser Iesu Grist*, the time as approved by the Lord, and had not been manipulated in the way they do these days into Summer Time or any of its derivatives. It reminded me again of the ancient sort of simplicity by which he ordered his life and through which he would accept my word unquestioning. I could not take his thanks but sat, not looking after his departing feet. The fish would not look at me, either, for which I was thankful, since I could not have met their eyes. It was no use. The day had died on me. So I went home, empty-handed as I had come.

WITH me the operations of conscience, I confess, are only noticeable here and there, and in a day or two I had forgotten—at least, not forgotten, but laid to one side in my mind. For on the Thursday next, about two in the afternoon it would be, I saw Morgan Lone-Marsh come stepping down the street of Llanfach. I say the street of Llanfach, since the street is Llanfach and the village is nothing but that one street. A cogitation of old limewashed walls of slate, a cobbler's, an ironmonger's, a shop that is every kind of shop, and a couple of public-houses that have seen Llanfach come and go. I will not say which of them had me as buttress for its wall just then, for I was not sure myself. But of one thing I was sure—that Morgan Lone-Marsh had come to town to do his shopping, to spend a while watching the grading, and to put in a little at the bank and draw out less. This he did, regular as the clock one day every week, and came now with his town-best suit on, brown, with breeches and soft long gaiters to his legs and a stick of the finest hazel from the hedge. Only he came, usual, on a Wednesday; and this was the Thursday and, what was more, it was early-closing day, too, of which observance is strict and punctual. What had been put to one side in my mind came so sharp to the front I could see nothing else. He had adjusted his calendar according to me.

THE TOWN OF TWO TUESDAYS

I had no wits to suit the occasion. I leant against the wall and watched.

It was to the bank that Morgan marched, straight and tapping with his stick like the footfalls of fate. The door was closed, so he struck upon it, demanding, and the head of Mrs Rimmer General Store came out of the upper window—which was by no means out of place, since the bank opened but once a week and occurred in her parlour-front. 'I have come,' said Morgan Lone-Marsh, ravelling his brows together, for by his calculations this was the one day the bank should have been prepared for business. 'Where is John Forden Cashier?' And he waved with his stick at the wall where the bicycle John Forden rode from Allt Melyn should have been propped. It was from Allt Melyn that the bank sent its clerk every Wednesday, and him pedalling the hills to sit for an hour or two in Mrs Rimmer's parlour-front, while she made tea for him and the customers.

There was no outfacing the kind of countenance Morgan Lone-Marsh carried with him. 'He is not here,' was all Mrs Rimmer the General could find to say.

'Then he should be,' said Morgan, taking out his watch. 'It is the day, the time, and the place. I will come in and I will wait for him.'

It was neither command nor request; it was, as with most of Morgan's expressions, the statement of historical fact noted at the time of occurrence. The door opened, and in he went, nor would he take the cup of tea that Mrs Rimmer offered him. It was not his habit to indulge the flesh, much less when so responsible a thing as a bank fell into delinquency. I could see his face, ruled and serious, looking out of the door, and Mrs Rimmer throwing her preparations together. For Morgan was no man to be questioned; if he said a thing should be, no one who heard him went into opposition, least of all such as Mrs Rimmer the General. Indeed, she had so little security in her own senses that she beckoned behind curtains for me to come over and met me at the door with a handful of coppers. 'Go now to the telephone, bach,' she whispered, 'and call Forden Cashier Allt Melyn. It is Lone-Marsh who has come down upon him and will not go away till he is here.'

'Wasn't it yesterday the bank was held?' I whispered back.

'Indeed and yes,' she answered. 'But it

must be Forden Cashier who made some mistake. Young he is, and Morgan Lone-Marsh not a man to dissemble his appointments.'

'It must be so,' said I, and took her pence and talked to young Forden. He was just off to go fishing.

'Fish not,' I told him. 'Your waters are troubled. There is a run on the bank here at Llanfach such as no man before has seen.'

I could tell from the jerk in his voice he would be over fast as pedals could take him. So I hung up and went back to Mrs Rimmer and signalled to her all would be well.

'Let us hope,' I heard the voice of Morgan say, 'that this will be enough admonition to him and that it can rest between him and me. Even I, not so long ago, mistook one day for another.'

Mrs Rimmer had nothing to say to this. Nor had I, standing as I was on the pavement wondering, as men do who have stopped up one gap in circumstances, where the problem would break through next. But I had not long to wait.

'It will take him two parts of an hour,' said Morgan. 'I will do my shopping between then and now, and lucky it is I have money about me.'

I HAD the bare chance to skip round the corner before Morgan came out, regular with his stick again like the ticking of time, for all that he was twenty-four hours behindhand with it. And to Gethin Ironmonger he went and looked at the closed door, and involved his eyebrows with indignation, and smote upon the door.

There was nothing by way of answer but Gethin hovering behind the window and making mouths of consternation and flapping his hands. Like a ghost Gethin was at the best of times, being a white little man of no sort of presence—and even more like a ghost then, behind the glass and no sound coming out of him.

Morgan pulled out his watch and waved it back at the ironmonger. And then, like many a man before him filled with revelations, he seemed to become aware not only of the wrath to come but the wrath already gathered about him, and set off across the street to clamour at the shop of Homer Cobbler. 'Is there none of you to-day with his hand to his business?' he shouted, lifting his voice over

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the place, so that heads came out of the public-houses and he had more congregation than ever he had had before.

'Be still!' said Homer Cobbler in his burly voice, standing with a pint in his hand. 'It is shame upon you, Morgan Lone-Marsh, to come like a gallimaufry of judgment, pursuing in the streets with outcry.' He was a big man, and, like most cobblers, had great command of words. What is more, he was much opposed to Morgan, being the kind of man who believes in the virtues of outward conformity since he has nothing inward by way of virtue to believe in.

'Shame upon you,' said Morgan, 'to lock your door between a man and his goods. Where are the boots I left with you this day week to mend?'

There was Gethin now in the street, fluttering his fingers round his mouth, and Mrs Rimmer with her apron to her nose, and the whole town assembling.

'This day week?' said Homer, scoffing. 'Why, it is yesterday you mean.'

'I mean to-day,' said Morgan, 'the day I come regular to town. I do not walk the miles of moor to mistake my day or be deceived at the end of it.'

'Well, 'deed, Mr Morgan bach,' said Gethin with his thin cough, 'I would not close my shop to you, but Thursday it is and early-closing day.'

'It is Wednesday,' said Morgan and struck his stick on the pavement.

'Well, Thursday I thought it was,' said Gethin, and looked at Morgan and then looked away. 'I *thought* it was Thursday,' he said and pinched his lips with his hand.

'Mrs Rimmer,' said Homer Cobbler with round eyes, 'go for the doctor. Morgan Lone-Marsh is mad.'

'Thursday?' Morgan exclaimed. 'You say it is Thursday, Gethin man? Look there and tell me is this not Wednesday we are in?' And he pointed with his stick—and what he pointed at was Forden Cashier coming on his bicycle with his hair in his eyes, looking neither to right nor left but desperate to reach the bank. Maybe he thought the crowd was the rush of creditors assailing it—I do not know. But what the crowd thought of him was evident enough. For Morgan had sufficient character and reputation to turn sunlight into moonlight for them, if he chose. And to see the bank being opened that day set them all aback.

'Well, 'deed,' said Gethin again. 'I thought

it was *Thursday*. Come in, Mr Morgan bach; my shop is yours.'

Even Homer Cobbler looked with doubt at the pint in his hand; and Gethin opened the door and Morgan went in. And then another came down street on his bicycle. But this time it was Ianto the Police.

IANTO looked at the crowd and he looked at Gethin's open door and Morgan one side of the counter and Gethin the other. 'Dear me,' said he, and got off his bicycle and propped it, solemn, against the kerb and went solemn to the shop. 'Buying and selling,' said Ianto. 'I am not sure what sort of offence it is, but there are others who will decide.' With which he licked a thumb and reached for his notebook, and the crowd stood stricken with calamity. 'Nor do I know,' said Ianto, 'which of you is principal and which accessory. But, knowing you both, I wish you were neither.'

Gethin was dumb, but Morgan had convictions and knew how to express them. 'Ianto,' said he with his lip firm, 'if I say it is Wednesday, you can take my word for it.'

'Mad,' whispered Homer Cobbler like a bull breathing. 'And glad am I to see the doctor at last with Mrs Rimmer to handle him.'

'What is this?' asked the doctor, sharp; and Ianto touched his cap to him, for the doctor was not only a man of science, but was justice of the peace as well.

'It is Morgan Lone-Marsh reversing the calendar,' said Homer, sarcastic, 'and saying it is Wednesday when the world and all men in it know it is Thursday.'

'The calendar has been revised before now,' said the doctor, for Homer was the sort of red-faced man who denies so much you feel you have to deny him too, just to make the score even. 'There's no reason why Morgan should not do it again.'

'It is Wednesday,' said Morgan, quiet and convinced.

'Well, have you any witnesses?' asked Ianto, not too sure of himself under Morgan's eye.

'Forden Cashier,' said Morgan, calm. 'Look—the bank stands open as well as Gethin's shop.'

For just that moment there was a blink of uncertainty in Ianto's face. The bank was the bank, after all, and its day of opening a cardinal occasion.

Homer, however, knew he was right, and

THE TOWN OF TWO TUESDAYS

righteous. 'Yesterday the bank was open. Saw young Forden myself, I did. It is Morgan who has made Mrs Rimmer send for him.' Nor could Mrs Rimmer deny it, nor did Forden himself, but asked what the run was on the bank he had come to deal with. 'And it was me who sent Mrs Rimmer for you,' said Homer to the doctor, blowing out his moustaches, 'for Morgan Lone-Marsh needs you more than justice.'

'Then it is as well I can dispense more than medicine,' said the doctor.

'It is breaching of the peace, at least,' said Ianto, sorrowful. 'You must find some other witness, Morgan, if you are to get off.'

Everyone stood silent, but for Homer's one laugh, which underlined that silence. For they all knew this would be the end of Morgan's repute and the infallibility of judgment men accorded him.

'There is my witness,' said Morgan with the light of trust on his face. And he lifted his stick towards me. 'He will bear me out. And why should he have lied to me for no reason at all?'

Public activity is not my way of life as you may know. But there I was as much a centre of observation as the sun in eclipse—and eclipse is no bad description of my feelings.

'I think I know him,' said Ianto, and I did not like his smile.

'So do I,' said the doctor, and I liked his less. 'We will forgather a moment in my surgery for diagnosis. But we will not need Mr Morgan.'

SO I sat on a wooden chair with Ianto and the doctor standing above me and told them all, without extenuations.

'It was fraudulent misrepresentation and passing-off,' said Ianto. 'And it would take a man like you to mislead a man like Morgan.'

'And worse to let him go as far as this in his credulity,' said the doctor, tapping me on the chest, 'without moving your tongue to warn him.'

'Listen,' said I, 'and let even the guilty speak in his own defence. We will leave aside the merits of fishing on Sunday, since, though it may be rest for some, it is professional avocation for me. I claim to be no more than the world and the flesh—but I am not the devil, for what I did was done to keep Morgan's spirit whole. What does it matter, me being perjured, if his simplicity is saved by

it? It is I who would alter the provisions of this world so that they would not overcome him, who lives in the next, while you, Ianto the Police, would enforce them at whatever expense to Morgan Lone-Marsh, who is by way of being a saint. For if he is made to learn the truth, he will not only lose faith in me, which maybe I deserve, but will find himself shamed in the eyes of the whole town, including Homer Cobbler. I doubt if he would ever recover, and the loss would be for all of us.'

'Which is as eloquent as I might expect from you,' said Ianto, aggrieved. 'But I have to administer the things of the present, and he lives in the past. I cannot have him bringing up yesterday to unsettle to-day.'

'It is a choice,' said I with my eyes on the doctor, 'between the irregularities of the pure in spirit, who must always contravene the world as it is, and the conformities of the respectable such as Homer Cobbler who have nothing in them, because of their conformity, which can ever save the world. Perhaps that is why your great saints always have a sort of sympathy with the underdogs and outlaws like me, since we both have the same enemy. It is a question of which the law should properly protect—Homer, who needs no protecting, since he covers himself with the letter, or Morgan, who needs it a great deal, since he is wrapped up in the spirit. The letter and the spirit, that is what you have to choose between.'

'If he is not disabused,' said Ianto, fending me off with his hand, 'then he will come next week and the week after, demanding Forden Cashier from Allt Melyn and knocking open all doors on early-closing day. It will be a perpetual revolution and I cannot countenance it.'

'He keeps his watch steady,' I told Ianto, 'at the old rate of time and will not put it forward or back the hour your regulations demand. Will you prosecute him for that? How can you prove what time it is, when your own laws deny the permanence of its measurement? There is plenty of precedent for overlooking this business and for saying Saturday is Sunday or Sunday Saturday, since your own dispositions do much the same twice a year.'

I had Ianto baffled, and he looked for guidance to the doctor, who stood in thought, then said: 'There is no doubt time is adaptable. And there is no reason on earth why the international date-line, which makes a reason-

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able compromise between to-day and to-morrow, should not run through Llanfach, if it chose, instead of through the Pacific. Not that we can manage that. But law is adaptable too, else there would never be two sides to any case.'

'You still cannot call Thursday Wednesday,' said Ianto, obstinate.

'No,' said the doctor. 'But you can say, and I can rule as justice of the peace, that Tuesday went on a little longer than usual, which will cover Morgan for this week. And for the next, we can arrange that Wednesday is early-closing day for Llanfach, and the bank will adjust itself accordingly and Morgan need never know. It may be irregular, but

irregularities in Morgan are of the sort justice should assist and not prevent. For if law must change and time be made the servant of mankind, it is for such as he it should be done—for the simple men to whom trust and truth are one and the same and greater than the whole world. That is all,' ended the doctor. 'The case is dismissed.'

Which I regard not so much as a triumph for my own advocacies as the assertion of the human soul over human machinery, and what makes Llanfach a place of considerable magnitude, notwithstanding that it is laughed at by the undiscerning as *Llanfach Dau Dy'mawrth*, or the Town of Two Tuesdays, up to the present time.

July First Story: *The Wedding of the Sea* by Brian Cleeve.

Customs and Manners

LAURENS SARGENT

'*HAVE* you anything to declare?' Having a hundred times answered 'No' to that question, I now say 'Yes'—for I would declare my appreciation of the Customs officers of many countries, and particularly of Great Britain.

If I could get hold of such a talisman as transposed the personalities of Paul Bultitude and his father in F. Anstey's *Vice Versa*, and could I find an accommodating official who would agree to a fortnight's exchange of bodies, I should like my spirit to spend the time in the shape of a Customs officer. Many persons of quite normal honesty might be none the worse for a temporary metamorphosis of this kind. If throughout the working hours of only a few days they were to gaze at a succession of queues of travellers resembling their ordinary selves, and had the responsibility for improving those defective memories that

are apt to forget five hundred cigarettes, a set of silk underwear, or a new camera at the bottom of a dressing-case, they might be imbued with a deeper respect both for truthfulness and for Customs officials.

Most of us have seen travellers trying to swing the lead, or, smugly conscious that they have in fact nothing to declare, trying to pull the leg of a *douanier*—or, at all events, trying the patience of one of a body of men who, notably in Britain, Scandinavia, and Holland, appear to combine the patience of Job with the wisdom of Solomon and the tact of Gamaliel. To these qualities, fortunately for the taxpayer, is added the psychological penetration of Sherlock Holmes.

THAT the men responsible for Customs and Excise can keep their sense of

humour is remarkable. Yet they can. Not long ago, when my wife and I were returning from Holland, the official at the airport asked: 'Have you any tobacco or cigarettes?'

'Yes,' I answered. 'I have the usual quantity of tobacco, and my wife the same—no cigarettes.'

'Does madam smoke a pipe?' asked the officer.

'Well, no,' I replied. 'But she may bring in the tobacco for me, mayn't she?'

I gathered from the reply that by the letter of the law her quota was for personal consumption only; but the incident ended by the officer's saying: 'Well, sir, let's just leave it at admitting that you have a dutiful wife.' That may not have been the first time that he had cracked that joke—but here's to him!

I have never tried to enter Russia or the Balkan states; but on the frontiers of the other European countries I have on only one occasion been treated with anything but courtesy by *douaniers*, *Zollbeamten*, *señores del aduana*, or revenue officers of any nation. The one exception may have been accounted for by a sleepless night or by a wiggling from a superior. But I must confess that he seemed a nasty piece of work, that particular *douanier*.

We met him between the wars, when we were travelling north from Rome in a train in which everything seemed to go wrong, including the water-supply, throughout the journey. The result was not improved by the brand of coal favoured by the engine. Eventually we arrived in Paris, two hours late, looking like nigger-minstrels.

At the frontier-station the hand-baggage of eight people crowded into a compartment intended for six had been politely checked and chalked. When the examination was over, I restored a suitcase of mine to its former position under the seat opposite to me. Soon afterwards a second official entered the compartment, carrying a long instrument like a fish-gaff, which he jabbed savagely under each seat, reckless of the four pairs of feet each side of him. He drew blank until he poked his halberd between the gaitered legs of my *vis-à-vis*, a French officer. Then, 'Ah!' he grunted ominously, and dragged out my suitcase. 'A qui—ça?' he demanded.

'C'est à moi, monsieur,' said I. 'Mais on l'a déjà douané. Voyez donc.' But to my dismay, as I tried to point to the chalk-mark, I

realised that the bloom of five short minutes ago had been brushed away by contact with the seat.

I will not repeat the man's rendering of 'Behanged to that for a tale.' Even his compatriots among the passengers remonstrated. Little he cared, and the glee on his face was almost satanic when he opened the suitcase and found a camera.

That camera I had borrowed from a friend in England. When I say that it was twenty years old, as its scratched condition indicated, you will believe me. But the *douanier* did not. Growling incivilities and threats, he grabbed the camera and his halberd or *gaffe* and rushed down the corridor towards the rear of the train. Happily I spotted on the platform a *commis de douane* of superior rank, and in thirty seconds all was joy and gladness—except on the face of the *gaffeur*, who looked as if he were about to throw himself on his weapon.

A FEW months later fate made up handsomely for that pinprick, when after a poor passage we had landed at Dover. The ship had been crowded, and my companion and I found ourselves almost at the end of one of the long queues in front of the baggage-counters.

'We're going to miss our connection in London,' we were saying, when I felt a slight pressure on my arm. For a moment I was able to realise the feelings of a cornered contrabandist. Then I heard my own name, followed by: 'Please come this way.'

Bypassing the crowds of more or less law-abiding travellers—most of whom looked knowingly at us, as if to say: 'Ha, caught at last!'—we tagged on behind the man in uniform. Up went a flap in the counter, and in we filed to a private part of the building.

'Here!' said our guide to a subordinate. 'Take the Major's stuff through.' Then, turning, so that for the first time I saw his face, he said: 'It is you, sir, isn't it? Do you remember me?'

Ten years previously that Customs officer had been a corporal in my battalion.

A piece of luck like that is not likely to be repeated, and yet, a year or two later, I met with a somewhat similar act of courtesy when I was on my way back from the States. It was on my entry to America a few weeks earlier that I had had my first chance of comparing

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the methods of the transatlantic Customs with those of Europe.

On the quay of that harbour into which, once upon a time, a large quantity of dutiable tea was dumped by a band of enthusiasts for free trade disguised as Red Indians I stood waiting for my baggage to be examined. In front of me was a young man wearing a wedding-ring. To the inquiry, 'Anything to declare?' he answered, 'No.'

None the less, or, it may have been, therefore, his interrogator told him to open his trunk—a huge affair with an arched top. 'What's this, then?' asked the official, holding up a large Newfoundland-dog-on-wheels that had been kennelled in the tray of the trunk.

'Just a toy for Junior,' answered the young fellow in that delightful Southern drawl that requires no apparent lip-movement.

The Customs officer was not mollified. 'Huh, a toy, is it?' he snarled. 'Toys are dutiable, brother! We'll see if there are any more toys in this playbox. If there are, they're goin' to cost you something.'

With that he levered the young man's possessions one by one from the trunk to the floor, crooked his finger at me with a 'You next,' and left Junior's father to repack an assortment of stuff that must have cost him a good hour to fit into his trunk before he left Europe. And that was that, as far as everyone else was concerned.

My two suitcases provided no fun for the Customs. I opened and shut them at the word of command, the officer marked them, and I walked away with one suspended from each hand.

A few minutes later I had a feeling that this was Elfdom, not the Land of the Free, for suddenly the heavy suitcase lugged by my right hand became light, light as a box of feathers, and almost immediately, still as if by wizardry, I was halted and drawn gently back. Then the fey feeling was dispelled by a menacing growl: 'Can't you let me hev y'r grip?'

This happened some years ago, which explains why one could expect every request to have a 'please' appended to it. Anyway, my curious reaction was to turn my head and say frostily and suggestively: '—please!'

'Please,' to my subsequent amazement, echoed the man who was now taking all the weight of my grip. That he was a Customs man had scarcely registered itself on my brain before he spoke again. 'Pardon me, boss,' he said, with a truly engaging smile. 'You've had

y'r baggage checked once a'ready, I guess?'

'Sure,' I replied. The word was about all the American that I knew at that time.

We ended by having highballs together, and parted with what I trust was mutual esteem.

A FEW weeks later I left the States, not from Boston, but from New York. As usual, before anyone could go aboard the liner he had to satisfy the Revenue Department that he had paid any tax due from him. Shortly before the time scheduled for my ship to leave harbour I was hindmost in a queue filing up towards the appropriate official, a giant of a man with arms bare and a singlet so lavishly cut away at the armholes that it looked like a white ribbon running down his vast chest. Between us stood a young Latin-American, almost weeping at the hazing that he was getting from the official.

'Huh! You can't do this, and you can't do that!' roared the giant. 'Sez you! You came into this country to try to make money on Wall Street. Now you've lost yours, you whine! Waal, you'll let me have proper 'stiffcuts from y'r bosses, to show how much money you've earned here, before you go a step nearer that ship!'

'But I cannot,' wailed the young man. 'My employer—he is in Brazil now. I cannot find him. I have no *dinero*—no money—left now—only eighty dollars. I have paid for my passage. I—'

'Cut it out,' said the official. 'Go get that 'stiffcut!'

The young man was indeed weeping as he went. He missed his sailing, of course.

Was I going to do so as well, I wondered. Also—what did the freeborn Englishman do if anyone talked to him like that?

My thoughts were interrupted by the voice of the giant, now sunk to a pleasant bass, like a benevolent thunderstorm. With a kindly grin, after taking a cursory glance at my papers, he said: 'I hope you've had a good time here in N' York.'

'Er, yes,' I answered. 'Yes, indeed, thank you.'

The big man looked as if he regarded the interview as over, but, as I still lingered, he inquired: 'Was there anything you wanted to ask?'

I could not help it. 'When does the hazing begin?'

For a moment the giant looked puzzled.

THE TICKET MAN

Then, coyly, almost simpering, he said: 'Huh! Hazing! There's no hazing done here. But you're bound to talk straight to them fellers.' Pausing long enough for a rapid action that would have infringed the law if he had been in a subway-car, he added: 'They don't get your meaning else. But, pardon me, have you lost your hat?'

As a matter of fact, I had lost my hat. At least, I had left it in my hotel, and I owned up to this piece of forgetfulness.

'I should worry!' said the giant. 'Tell you

what—I'll telephone the ho-tel and tell um to send your lid right away. It'll be aboard sooner than what you are.'

It was.

A few hours later Liberty smiled on us from her pedestal as we steamed beneath her. There was nothing relentless in her smile, nothing cryptic. It was just the smile of the warm-hearted mother of a great nation whose manners and methods are rather different from our own, but among whom one may find the same kindly Customs.

The Ticket Man

FRANK INGLEDUEW

SHORTLY after midnight the overhead-cranes rumbled to a standstill on the high gantries, the drivers descended vertical iron ladders and disappeared into little cabins for sandwiches and dominoes, and the Ticket Man began his round.

First, he passed through the misleadingly-named Fish Plant.

The Fish Plant was a tin-roofed, open-sided edifice devoted to the manufacture of fish-plates, which were short flat bars, pierced with holes, used in bolting together lengths of railway-line. The place smelt not of fish but of two large iron tubs of creosote, into which the fish-plates were dipped after the manufacturing process was completed.

The Fish Plant was worked by a day-shift, and in the night it was deserted except for a prowling cat. As the Ticket Man passed the long, brick-walled furnace where the fish-plates were heated before the bolt-slots were stamped in them, he could hear numbers of unseen crickets stridulating domestically on the always-warm hearth.

One of the Ticket Man's customers, an old watchman in a shiny, grease-black waistcoat, came out of a cabin at the far end of the plant

and emptied a billycan of tea-leaves on to a glittering, perfectly-diced mound of fine coal used to stoke the furnace.

The Ticket Man halted by the old man and practised a little deception. Instead of producing his wad of tickets, with two fingers he tonged from his waistcoat-pocket one solitary ticket, for which his customer paid and hurried into the cabin to open. It was this old man's gambling idiosyncrasy to believe that all good luck lay in the last ticket of the pack. The Ticket Man was not going to walk all the way back, after disposing of every ticket except one, just to humour that superstition.

When the Ticket Man brought out a bundle of tickets in a crowded cabin, there was always an eager surge forward of the few men who believed their good luck lay in having the first choice from the new pack. The last ticket left after all the others had been chosen was also popular, and not only with the old watchman, and men had been known to refuse to buy a ticket if they could not have the last, the orphan, the outcast of the pack. To humour this fad, the Ticket Man before beginning his round extracted three or four tickets from his rubber-banded wad and carried them loosely

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in his waistcoat-pockets, producing them one at a time as occasion required.

THE tickets the Ticket Man was peddling were small square booklets of thin cardboard, whose pastel shades varied from day to day. The two leaves had been machine-stitched together with a ragged semicircle of white cotton thread. When the thread was unpicked and the booklet opened, a date and a printed list of all the letters of the alphabet was revealed, with two of the letters hand-stamped in indelible ink at the top. The cover of the booklet announced that this was Thingamybob's Double, and whoever held the ticket with the winning combination of letters would be paid twenty pounds. Thingamybob was a celebrated tipster who forecast the result of one horserace every day in a national newspaper. The Ticket Man's wares were based on the first and last letters of the name of the horse tipped to win. Every ticket contained a combination of letters unique to itself, and it made no difference whether the horse lost or won.

It was a profitable sideline for the Ticket Man. He was paid a commission on the sale of the tickets, and it was the custom for those who won to slip him a pound or two. There were other Ticket Men, with other varieties of tickets, in existence, on which many of their customers spent more than a pound a week.

THE Ticket Man crossed railway-lines, walked up a gently-sloping concrete ramp past loose silvery coils of newly-minted wire, and entered the Wire Works. His hearing was immediately delighted with a low-keyed discordant whining, as though a numerous orchestra of insect-miniature violins was tuning-up. Sometimes, and as happens to the roar of road traffic, the discordancy chanced to resolve into brief melodies. And, as though to the violin-sounds, a ballet of tubular metal frameworks, shaped like the outlines of truncated pyramids, slowly rotated, winding bright wire round themselves.

The Ticket Man had to walk carefully, for the building was criss-crossed with wires slowly travelling along at head height, and the floor in parts was extremely slippery, as though somewhere in the manufacturing process soft-soap was used as a lubricant. The wires dipped into and emerged from a sort of open

fire-pit as large as a swimming-bath, waist-high from the floor, which looked as though it had just been replenished with grey hillocks of lumpy coke; heavy whitish fumes arose and billowed under the slanting roof. Regularly from a side door labourers emerged, each quickly pushing a single-wheeled barrow carrying an untidy coil of thick wire, which was tipped red-hot on to the floor.

Like a mad picture framed in the fumes and travelling wires the Ticket Man saw a distant vignette of three of his customers. They dragged heavy-looking billets of steel one at a time on to a set of rollers on stands. The three of them gripped each billet and energetically ran it along the rollers until one end was swallowed by the semicircular, flame-yellow mouth of a small furnace. They put so much force behind the billet on the smooth-running rollers that when they peeled away from it near the furnace-mouth, it continued to slide forward under its own momentum, to be wholly swallowed by the flames.

The Ticket Man offered his wares to each of the men in turn. Two of them were what he considered to be normal selectors of tickets—that is, they flipped through the pack and made their choice from the middle of it. But the face of the third man had slowly assumed a sulky expression, and in his perplexity he raised his cap two or three times, as though allowing his head to breathe. The Ticket Man waited patiently, knowing this man's foible. Only the other day he had selected this man's ticket, as requested, and, of course, it had lost. This customer had also asked his mates at various times to select a ticket for him, and they had been unlucky too—as unlucky as himself on the few occasions when he had dared to choose his own. Towards those who picked an unrewarding ticket for him, while he did not go so far as to voice any accusation, he behaved as though he had been deliberately insulted or wronged. Nobody liked choosing a ticket for him. One day someone would select a winner, and then that unfortunate would have to pursue his initial success week after week by choosing a whole series of failures, while the man he had benefited grew sulkier and more brusque. The difficult customer took the bundle of tickets and asked a barrow-pusher to select one for him.

THE Ticket Man's next stop, after crossing a dark chasm of railway-lines in spotting

THE TICKET MAN

rain, was on the Hot Bank, where the metal bars were rolled into their final shape. And it really was a hot bank—a vast metal floor raised on hundreds of dumpy concrete pillars a few feet above ground-level, the air quivering as heaps of rolled bars slowly cooled from crimson to mauve. The bars, still furious with heat after their final backwards and forwards squeezing between heavy, labouring rolls, travelled along a stream of little rollers bedded in the floor, halting for a moment while a jagged-toothed circular-saw advanced screaming upon them and cropped off their ragged ends. A boy with tongs, turning his back on the sparks from the saw, threw the crop-ends casually into a metal skip. The sawn bars advanced again, to the end of the rollers, clanged against a metal stopper, and three steel jockeys protruding between the floor-plates skidded them out of the way on to the bank.

The Ticket Man handed his bundle of tickets to a slinger in clogs and dark-blue, almost purple, shirt which toned into the gloomy and lurid surroundings. Many of the men there wore clogs—leather warped and cracked too easily in the heat—and sometimes the Ticket Man had the impression that he had gone back a hundred years in time to the Industrial Revolution.

Looking with half-closed eyes into the middle distance, the slinger fingered through the tickets, his lips moving slightly until he had counted off a secret number, before plucking one from the middle of the bundle and immediately beginning to unpick the thread. Few of the Ticket Man's customers had enough self-control to extract the maximum amount of fun and suspense from their purchase of tickets by waiting until the winning combination of letters was published before looking at what they had drawn. When the Ticket Man did meet such a one, he took it as a sure sign of a gambling instinct not jaded and habitual enough to remain a customer with him for long.

The Ticket Man lingered on the Hot Bank until another of his customers, a stocktaker, or checker as he was more familiarly known, completed the task he was doing. The checker had a sheaf of brightly-coloured stock-sheets sticking from his pocket and a squashed tin of paint dangling from one hand. On the ends of the still-hot bars towards the rear of the Hot Bank he painted white numbers, which spluttered and bubbled as they steamed

dry. There was a constant stealthy creaking going on, and the Ticket Man could see the bars, which had been ramrod-straight as they glided off the rollers, warping and bending as they cooled, arching like the backs of frightened cats, or like frizzled kippers, into a blue tangle.

The Ticket Man followed the checker into a little cabin at the side of the Hot Bank. The dark cube, with its one electric-bulb thickly coated with dust, looked as though it had never been cleaned out since the day it was built. Caps with broken peaks lay among old shoes, and in shapelessness the discarded headgear strangely resembled the footwear. With feigned indifference, as though here was one man, at least, whose mind was wholly free from superstition, the checker slid the uppermost ticket from the thinning wad. Not at any price could he abide the Ticket Man, who was fond of making that most infuriating of all statements to labouring men: 'I've no need to work for a living.' When asked why he nevertheless did so, the Ticket Man would explain the only reason he came to work was to enable him to contact his customers—he could live on what he earned from his tickets.

THE Ticket Man walked on through the rain until he reached the furthest limit of his round, and was confronted by a low wall, or embankment. The ground beyond stretched away level with the top of the wall, as though the earth had taken one step up. The Ticket Man ascended a short flight of stone steps which did not seem to have been designed for human use. Each step was high, but very narrow, affording only a toe-hold, so that the Ticket Man had to lean well forward and stagger shakily up them.

He was standing on a sandy, gloomily-lighted plain, with the rain coming down more heavily, and he could discern the vast structures of furnaces beyond. One of his customers was among those working on that sandy flat, a few yards from the wall.

The furnacemen were jacketless, in shirt-sleeves, and unaffected by the rain. A furnace had recently been tapped. The burly shirt-sleeved men had long crowbars in their hands, and they levered at thin channels of grey iron cooling in the sand. The Ticket Man had never worked on the furnaces, but he knew these channels filled with iron were called pigs. The heat where the labourers worked must

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have been considerable. The rain came down in streaks and then, just above the men's heads, seemed to strike a level invisible roof of heat and evaporate into splashes of steam. The thinly-clad shoulders of the men sheltered with the heat remained dry, unless sweat-soaked.

Stepping cautiously across the sand, the Ticket Man played four of his tickets in front of a labourer's face. Scarcely glancing at the tickets, the furnaceman scooped them indifferently into the pockets of his moleskin trousers, and there and then paid the Ticket Man with a ten-shilling note crumpled into a ball. The furnacemen earned big money and spent it.

THAT was another good night-shift nearly over. The rain was slackening off, too. It had been fairly warm all night, the sky was lightening, and the Ticket Man looked forward to a fine summer's day. He walked back along the river-bank towards his cabin. Under his feet a drainpipe of steaming water, used in

cooling the steelmill's rolls, thundered into the brimming river. At low tide the smelly, brown mud-bed of that poisoned river was a remarkable sight, carpeted with a variety of iron objects of peculiar shape, whose use the Ticket Man himself could not explain, even though he belonged to the Iron Age. Thrown into the river by idle men and boys, many of whom must have been of Herculean strength, the shaped iron lumps lay side by side, as though deliberately placed there by a careful working-party solely employed on that task, a deposit that might puzzle archaeologists in some future century, unless rusted away in the meantime.

The dawn sky was pale with a diffused light, and wraiths of mist glided sideways along the surface of the water, like a million ghostly skaters. The Ticket Man was sad as he watched the silent, sea-going throng, as all men must be who lead pointless, futile lives, and see themselves being left behind, standing alone on a deserted bank in the unearthly dawn.

Weeds

*Up, up early
Before the sun snatches
White, cusped, pearly
Crowns from the roses,
Pimpernel, Shepherd's Glass,
Opens and stands
Welcoming day
With his buds like pink hands.*

*Rest-Harrow pauses,
And shrill Bugles blow,
And Joy-of-the-Ground
Is creeping below.
Climbing Corydalis
And Traveller's Joy
Go with Colt's Foot a-clopping
And Hound's Tooth to bay*

*At Hare's Foot and Sheep's Bit,
Cat's Ear and Bird's Foot.
But, with Devil's Bit by him,
And counting his loot,
Old Ragged Robin
Sits by the stile.
Though Hunger Weed gnaws him
Broad and bleared is his smile.*

*For here's Brandy Bottle
And a Shepherd's Purse stuffed
With Pearlwort and Pennywort
Lords-and-Ladies have missed,
Whilst Eyebright laughs at him,
And Nonsuch lets down
Her bright wealth of hair
From Venus' Comb.*

*But John-Go-to-Bed-at-Noon
Stretches and yawns.
Already the shadows
Grow long over lawns.
Lady's Slipper and Skullcap
Are doffed and thrown down,
And the Moon Daisy only
Stays watching alone.*

MARGARET STANLEY-WRENCH.



Dougie's Brose and Bonaparte

MALCOLM LAING

DOUGHIE sat on a stool at the peat-fire in Drimsdale bothy holding a bowl of brose between his hands and blowing away on the steaming oatmeal, his cheeks bulging like a piper's in full blast. Without diverting his breath, he turned his eyes on his mate Ronald, missing since early morning and now rushing past without a word ben to the bunk end, soon to reappear from that dark recess with all his worldly goods wrapped in a plaid over his left shoulder. Dougie, still blowing away, gave another side-glance in utter amazement at the excited youth standing impatiently with his right hand stretched out for a farewell shake. In response, the blower fixed the wooden bowl between his knees and lifted his breath to say: 'What's your hurry, and where on earth are you going?'

Ronald very briefly related his misadventure—how Charlie, the minister's pony, had come to a soft prolonged halt, and so his own hasty flight. 'I'm leaving without warning or wages and must be far enough away before the minister gets here. You better leave your brose to cool itself and run as fast as you can to Druidibeg ditch to extricate the poor creature. Good-bye.' This, of course, was

all in Gaelic, the language spoken in Uist then—as now.

THE lad had gone out at sunrise to catch the three-year-old Highland colt so as to have him saddled in the stable by breakfast-time, for he carried his master on pastoral rounds and ministrations in a parish stretching thirty-three miles from Eriskay Sound in the south to the farthest extremity of Benbecula.

Ronald's situation as horseman on Drimsdale farm had been no sinecure. When he came there the first task assigned to him was breaking in the wild colt on the silvery beach along the Atlantic edge, where the track was soft and tiring for a quadruped; then, after many days of such taming exercise, urging the harnessed animal to drag sled-loads of wet seaweed from the shore up through a gap of loose sand in the white brow of the machair and over the bent grass of the dunes. This went on till the beast was quiet enough to bear a saddle and carry the minister safely through the townships of the parish. But Charlie loved the open spaces when set free

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from duty, and on summer nights was allowed to roam over the rugged moor.

That morning Ronald wandered far before he spied the pony on the green delta of a burn flowing into Loch Druidibeg and soon stalked close to him. He got a grip of his mane with one hand, only to lose it when he tried to slip the bridle on. Charlie moved quickly out of reach. This happened repeatedly, even when he seemed well cornered on a peninsula or up against a steep outcrop of rock. The wily animal always managed to break away and gallop off to a safe distance, obviously enjoying this catch-who-can game.

Getting tired of the chase, the lad was beginning to lose his temper. He could not go back without the stubborn beast, and, looking at the sun now climbing well over the hills, he realised that the Rev. George Munro was probably at that moment waiting for his mount. The horseman, by this time desperately determined, chased his challenger on to a marsh to slow his pace and, having succeeded in getting him wallowing to the knees close to a wide, deep ditch, sprang for the capture.

Charlie, not yet in surrender mood, got his hoofs free and jumped for the firmer footing across the gaping channel; but, failing in the effort, he got bogged down to the haunches. The pursuer picked up a caber with which he could reach the hindquarters and began to rain blows on the struggling creature, giving vent to the wildest Gaelic oaths each time he delivered a heavy whack, quite unaware that the minister was a rapidly approaching spectator.

'Have you not killed him yet?' There was a furious ring in that shout of intervention. The owner was roused to righteous wrath at sight of the harsh treatment meted out to his dumb friend. Charlie was his darling. The startled assailant dropped his clumsy weapon and fled before the brewing storm. It did not take him long to decide that the wisest thing for him to do was to quit at once and without the formality of notice on either side.

APPROACHING the farmstead swiftly in a state of panic, Ronald kept a ridge of hillocks between him and the big house windows, for the minister's wife was sure to be watching and waiting for the safe arrival of man and beast. Should he encounter her, it would be extremely difficult for him to answer awkward questions concerning his

master's long delay on the moor and about the lost pony, a special favourite of hers. It was she who chose the romantic name Charlie for the bonny fair foal when it frolicked in a paddock, in memory of the Prince who owed his life to her aunt Flora.

Leaving Dougie to his brose, the fugitive set course for home, thirteen miles away in Benbecula. There were no roads in Uist then, nor for long after that summer. His track lay over machairland, kindly under foot and fragrant with the scent of wild flowers and clover. As he hurried north, having launched himself impulsively into the unknown, the ceaseless sighing of the vast Atlantic struck awe into his very soul. No terrestrial spot broke its heaving surface between him and American shores, except the solitary stack of Rockall, two hundred and thirty miles due west of the flat lochdar common he had to traverse before reaching Benbecula Ford.

Of course, he never dreamed of the mighty aerial marvels that lonesome plain was to yield habitation to more than a century subsequent to his generation. The only thought that obsessed his mind was escape from the shadow of shame to undisturbed safety; he must move fast and far. Out there, far across the sea, some of the folk he knew in boyhood days had found a rewarding way of life; and many were still sailing hopefully for Nova Scotia. No doubt Ronald would have decided there and then to join his compatriots on their new Gaelic island, but such a desirable venture required lengthy preparation and much money—whereas all his worldly gear was on his shoulder, and none of it had a metallic ring.

His sanctuary problem, however, was soon to solve itself. On reaching home, he heard news that brought relief to his troubled mind: a recruiting-sergeant in braw uniform was handing out the King's shilling to young men as fast as they could come to Gramsdale Inn. Thither he went without delay and enlisted. In a few days, among three-score stalwarts, he embarked on a packet at Lochmaddy for Dunvegan, to march through Skye on to Fort George.

By the time those recruits had been drilled to perfection, Bonaparte was commencing his European rampage. Ronald was one of the gallant Highlanders who took part in the ultimate defeat of his ubiquitous hosts. Our hero campaigned through the Continent,

DOUGIE'S BROSE AND BONAPARTE

fought and bled in the Peninsula, and shared in the decisive victory of Waterloo—where a wide ditch proved the undoing of French horsemen. Soon thereafter he came back to his native Benbecula carrying a creditable discharge.

MANY seasons had come and gone, many peat-stacks had burned on the bothy hearth, since Ronald was a lad at Drimsdale; but memory of Druidibeg ditch never faded. During the intervening years Charlie continued to carry his master throughout the parish, and occasionally over the fords to the seat of presbytery in North Uist. Both man and animal were now slowing in pace with age, but yet in good health when the soldier returned from the wars, a fit man despite his scars.

A month or two after Ronald settled down in the old home, the postman, who made irregular journeys on foot between the unpredictable Lochmaddy packet and Benbecula, brought him an important O.H.M.S. schedule with attached instructions to the effect that the parish minister's attestation as to identification was essential to the completion thereof. There was also an appended warning that forfeiture of pension rights would result should the discharged soldier fail to implement such stipulated conditions within a year and a day, reckoned from the last day on which the said soldier wore uniform in the armed forces of the Crown.

All this appeared more formidable to Ronald than a bayonet stand in reception of Bonaparte's cavalry. He never forgot the raging rebuke that drove him to the drill-squad and the battlefield. Could he face his old master again? He put those papers away in his wooden trunk for further consideration. Many a morning did he look southward indecisively in the direction of Drimsdale House, but could not now summon up the courage that had never failed him in sanguinary conflict.

Then one day, re-examining the dreaded document, he realised that the period of grace would very soon expire, and that he must risk renewed reprimand and perhaps some legal penalty, or silently abandon his claim for ever. The old folk at home encouraged him to make the fateful journey without another day's delay. They said: 'The minister is old now and much milder in his moods. At the

worst he can only refuse you and send you to the sheriff court. He can't kill you, anyway.'

SO it came to pass that Ronald wended his way leisurely toward Drimsdale, back over the track he had taken in flight so long ago. He observed conspicuous changes the years of exile had wrought in the townships through which he passed—old folk he knew in his youth were gone; youngsters he could only identify by parental resemblance; some cosy cottages where he used to ceilidh now exposed bleached rafters concaved over spreading nettles and tall thistles.

He hurried away from the sad sight to the sandhills overlooking the eternal sea. Forging the channels where Atlantic and Minch waters mingle in ebb and flow, he came to Iochdar Machair. No change there—the same old colourful carpet of wild flowers and clover unrolled before him; meadow-rue, so coveted for its dye, still held its ground; ringed plover scurried through the bent grass with their chicks; the skylark's song trilled on the shimmering air; beyond a poppy-sprinkled field of rye cattle grazed on the green sward skirting Loch Bee, while a herd-lad waded the brackish water in search of flounders. Machair Mòr had not altered in any way. Not for another seven-score years would it change 'into something rich and strange'.

The sun was in the heart of the south when Ronald arrived at Drimsdale House. Knocking diffidently on the back-door, he was told that the minister was not in, but would be soon. 'Ach then, I'll wait in the bothy,' said the nervous inquirer, grateful even for a short respite. So over to his old abode he went. It was eating-time on the farm, and Dougie was there still. They had just begun to exchange news, when a maidservant ran in to say that the master had returned and was ready to receive the stranger at once. She would lead him to the study in the big house.

Without introduction or explanation, Ronald handed his precious papers to the minister, who failed to recognise him till he read his name and designation. For a moment he stared sternly at the silent suppliant standing to attention respectfully and anxiously before him. Then, in a voice vibrating with the old ominous ring, came the direful hark-back: 'I suppose you remember the plight in which you left Charlie and myself, though it happened many years ago?'

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'Yes, sir,' came the reply—bravely enough. 'It's whole twenty-two years since I fled from Druidibeg ditch. But I made it up to Charlie to-day and let him into the clover field for a while. Ach, he is looking and feeling better than myself, and grown so tame and friendly, sir.'

The old master, relenting somewhat, said: 'I'll help you on one condition. You have been to the wars, fought in foreign lands, and seen wonderful things between the time you left Drimsdale and this day of your return. You must tell me truthfully and to my satisfaction, before I put pen on your pension

papers, the most wonderful sight you have seen in all that time.'

'Yes, sir,' answered Ronald confidently, 'I can tell that without a word of a lie in it. Before I went away to fight Bonaparte, I said good-bye to Dougie in the bothy as he sat on a stool that morning blowing on his bowl of brose. To-day I found him sitting on the same stool, blowing on the same bowl—he's at it yet. I never knew that brose took so long to cool. That's the most marvellous sight I have seen in twenty-two years, sir.'

The Rev. George Munro signed with a hearty laugh.

Photographing the World

Aerial Map-Making

FRANK HUNTLY

STANLEY LOTT, a civilian pilot, was flying in mountainous Oregon when heavy icing forced his plane down to 4700 feet. He radioed his station for instructions. They warned him to keep above 7000 feet. Lott tried, but couldn't. Presently he flew into a mountain-top, killing himself and two passengers.

This was no misjudgment on the pilot's part. The accident was due solely to the fact that the ridge which he hit was not on the charts because the area had never been topographically mapped. Less than a tenth of the world has in fact been properly mapped, and many existing maps relating to other portions are inaccurate, though both these defects are now being gradually corrected. So far, western Europe has been faring best, since the arrangements for European defence under N.A.T.O. require it. And Britain leads the way because this country has always excelled in ground survey and map-making, and still contrives to keep technically ahead of other

countries. The Ordnance Survey maps, which cover with such intimacy the whole of Great Britain and are constantly brought up to date, command the envy of the entire world of cartographers.

SINCE aerial photography was harnessed to newer kinds of mapping, the British industry has employed several thousands more men and women. On the *National Atlas* alone some three thousand have been engaged both outdoors and in from the early months of the War, and the end of this vast undertaking is now in sight. This sweepingly comprehensive atlas is an affair of scores of sheets, each 5½ by 3½ feet, the whole being designed from a survey itself built upon data supplied from a hundred sources and translated into terms of maps embracing every aspect of the nation's life and resources. One deals exhaustively with administrative areas, another is concerned solely with topography, a third and fourth

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are land classification and utilisation maps, while others cover respectively types of farming land, population densities, coal and iron areas, iron and steel regions, roads, railways, electricity and statutory supply areas, and so on.

The section which deals with land utilisation was in fact almost completed before the War. This was just as well, for it showed in detail what all land from Land's End to John o' Groats was best fitted to grow—information which soon enabled us to expand our plough-land acreage by 60 per cent, and so to double the production of essential foods. The scale of these sheets is so large—10 inches to the mile—that if all were laid side by side they would measure over half-a-mile. An important point is that the scale makes examination possible by several persons at one and the same time.

Nothing so detailed had ever been attempted before, although these maps have been surpassed for detail by another series since begun. These, being on a scale of 50 inches to the mile, are able to record the positions of some 4,000,000 houses, as well as hedges, garden-paths, walls, letter-boxes, and even hydrants and flagpoles. As may be guessed, these moderns are for the use of town- and house-planning authorities. A major part in their preparation is played by aerial survey, and not infrequently a city council employs the method independently. Sheffield, for example, used it for the express purpose of speeding up house-building. The experiment was made with the help of contoured maps prepared from aerial photographs of nineteen housing sites. The survey, made in a few hours, at once provided the architects responsible for the layout plans with all necessary data. A similar survey on the ground would have taken months. An earlier utilisation of this method was the air-photo mosaic of the new town of Stevenage, which had been made up from rectified enlargements of airfilm.

AERIAL photography has advanced far since its first efforts, when a pilot had to swoop low over the target while his cameraman leaned out of the cockpit, gripping his instrument with both hands, earnestly praying for results. For each successive shot the camera had to be reloaded.

Now air photography has even been adjusted to jet speeds—photography at 600 m.p.h.!

To a technique that has achieved this and the air-photoing and mapping of millions of square miles of the earth's surface almost anything in this sphere is now possible. So the field is rapidly widening. Apart from building surveys, the camera aloft has been aiding the increasing needs of agriculture, revealing for mapping such valuable secrets as the most productive soil colours and the effects of shadows on crops. For archaeology aerial survey is confirming the positions of ancient roads, tracks, and buried buildings. Hidden under grass, crops, or trees in British fields are an estimated total of a thousand lost villages of the Middle Ages. It is hoped in time to identify the outlines of most of these, as has been done in the case of the Derbyshire Elizabethan village of Edensor, so that excavation can begin. This may disclose some fascinating details of medieval building methods and village planning.

SLOWLY modern air survey, pioneered by Britain and the Commonwealth, is bringing the rest of the world into line. Air survey is, in fact, remapping the earth. And in the process it is disclosing some remarkable inaccuracies in current maps. Canadian air surveyors have found that an island in Hudson's Bay is shown the wrong way round; that there are 5000 square miles of islands on their north-east coast where existing maps record only empty sea. Maps of Australia show lakes which aerial survey of its 3,000,000 square miles prove to have been almost certainly bone-dry for a century. It is small wonder that surveyors have taken to the air to put the old maps right. The new map of the island continent will be a prime factor in developing its enormous hidden resources. On the surveys already made are being based a new series of charts for civil aviation.

One purpose of the air survey of 4000 square miles of British Guiana was the preparation of contour maps from which to settle in promising regions thousands of European refugees as well as surplus Caribbean populations. Agricultural development in Israel is relying on a dewfall map produced from aerial survey. In a land of rainless summers dew is a major matter for vegetation, and the map shows by contours how much dew falls annually in particular regions. From these and other data farm planners can decide what to plant and where.

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THE map-maker of yesterday was a 'nomadic, rugged individual who tramped the countryside, spent his time plodding up steep mountains and splashing across swamps.' To-day the job has become an exact science—an affair of electrical equipment, radar, helicopters, and aerial reconnaissance. R.A.F. units which, radar-equipped, had earlier air-mapped the West African hinterland, flew 40,000 miles over East Anglia during the disastrous floods of February 1953. From their 70 sorties came 16,000 negatives which revealed shore breaches unseen by the ground workers.

The scope of mapping, under the new master-hand of air survey, is probably unbounded. An aerial map of the whole Australian continent, based on the work of innumerable flights by several aircraft, was a gigantic undertaking. But an American plane has actually taken what is virtually a *single* picture of the whole of the United States. It was made in a single non-stop coast to coast flight at a height of eight miles. Spread out, it measures 192 feet, and was made up from 390 exposures shot at a speed of one every sixty-six seconds. From this has been built a relief-map which shows at a glance how population and industry density increases from west to east.

This is, in fact, the largest relief-map in existence. But the dream of one British cartographer—a giant relief-map a hundred yards long—will, if realised, easily surpass in size the American achievement. The map was envisaged for the Festival of Britain, but was not completed. However, the man who thought of it still hopes it will come to pass. A gigantic model of Great Britain, including tiny representations of every important road and landmark, it would enable all who

ramble, motor, and cycle to roam and explore the countryside in miniature in person while planning routes for forthcoming excursions and holidays.

The idea behind the greatest map project of all actually dates back to 1891. It is an up-to-date International Map of the World, and is sponsored by the International Geographical Union. Little was done to further the concept until Britain in 1909 invited the interested foreign ambassadors to London to settle outstanding questions. By 1938 forty-eight sovereign nations had been won over to the idea, then the approaching war again shelved it. Modifications based on air reconnaissance have since been made, but to date there are still 500 sheets to be finished out of the planned total of 961.

MEN are even reaching out into space to bring the extra-terrestrial regions within the scope of the present map-revision campaign. Astronomers at Mount Palomar Observatory, California, are at work on a great photographic map of the universe. The photographs are being taken with the Schmidt telescope, which has a wider angle of view than the 200-inch Hale instrument. 'When completed, the Universe map should,' asserts the President of the Mount Palomar Institute of Technology, 'constitute an astronomical bible for a century to come.'

As for individual members of the universe, the first of these to receive the attention of the map-makers may, in fact, antedate by years the long-deferred International Map of the World. Scientists have been seriously discussing an attempt to draft a new and accurate map of the mountains and craters of the Moon with the aid of radar.

That One!

*Say if I was a mayfly
A-dancing o'er the stream,
With never thought beyond to-day,
To-morrow's life a dream—
I'd want for only one thing,
For one boon only pray,
Of all the days to take to wing
I'd have the longest day.*

H. R. DAFFIN.

His Majesty's Horse Gunners

The Story of The King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery

J. M. BRERETON

'*HALT—action front!*' The thunder of galloping hooves ceases and the phalanx of horses and guns is brought up abruptly in a swirl of dust. Momentarily, all seems confusion as men fling themselves from the saddle and dash to gun trails and wheels, their riderless mounts bucketing and plunging around the horse-holders. Then: '*Limber—drive on!*' Teams and led horses go cantering to the rear, and out of the apparent chaos appears a well-ordered battery of six guns, their threatening muzzles perfectly aligned, each detachment number crouching in place behind the shield or kneeling at the trail.

Traditionally, the Royal Horse Artillery have brought up their guns at a gallop, thereby affording a spectacle which has never failed to excite a thrill of admiration, from friend and foe alike. To-day, the fifteen service batteries representing this *corps d'élite* drive into action mounted in tanks and self-propelled 25-pounder guns; the roar of engines and clatter of tracks has replaced the drumming of hooves; busby and jacket have given way to beret and battledress. Though the fighting spirit is unchanged and the honour of serving in the 'Right of the Line' is as high as ever, the spectacle and panoply are long vanished from the field. Only the coveted 'H' in his shoulder-titles reminds the Royal Horse Artilleryman of his former calling.

Raised in 1793 as the mounted branch of their parent unit, the Royal Regiment of Artillery, the Horse Gunners continued true to their name until the late 1930's, when, like their cavalry comrades, they underwent the inevitable metamorphosis dictated by mechanised warfare. On the outbreak of the Second World War the last mounted unit of

Gunners—'K' Battery, R.H.A.—handed over its horses to a remount depot and left its barracks at St John's Wood, London, to win honour in the Dunkirk retreat. With its departure, it seemed that yet another long-established tradition was finally severed.

Since 1880 it had been customary for a succession of horse artillery batteries to be stationed at The Wood, where, in addition to their normal training, they played an important role in state and ceremonial functions. The galloping musical drive of the 'Ceremonial Battery' astonished the crowds that flocked to the early Royal Tournaments; its blue-and-gold uniforms, gleaming harness, and furnished gun-carriages added brilliance to such pageantry as the Opening of Parliament and the Lord Mayor's Show. A new sovereign ascending the throne was saluted by the roar of the battery's guns in the Park, the royal birthdays were similarly honoured—and at the close of the reign the royal remains were borne to their lying-in-state on the battery's gun-carriage. The spectacle of Horse Gunners in full dress became as truly familiar to Londoners as that of the sovereign's own escort of Lifeguards and Blues. But at the end of the war the R.H.A.—unlike the Household Cavalry—were destined to serve fully mechanised; and the stables and gun-park at St John's Wood remained empty.

In all probability they would still be empty had it not been for the personal intervention of King George VI. In December 1945 His Majesty's Private Secretary was directed to write to the Under Secretary of State for War pointing out that the custom of firing salutes on the King's birthday had been suspended during hostilities and that the King would like

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the practice to be resumed on the next celebration. Moreover, the note went on, 'His Majesty hopes that by then the saluting battery, normally stationed in St John's Wood, will have reverted to its pre-war status as a Royal Horse Artillery battery with the appropriate uniform . . .' Thus it was that, after a period of gestation at the War Office, the necessary orders were issued, and the unit now honoured as The King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery, came into being.

THE King's Troop enjoys several unique distinctions. It is the only horsed battery of artillery in the British Commonwealth; it is the only artillery unit permanently entitled to wear full dress; though the youngest representative of the British Army, it exercises the R.H.A. privilege of 'Right of the Line'—the privilege of parading, with guns, on the right flank, and marching at the head of all other regiments or corps, irrespective of seniority; and The King's Troop is the only unit, within the last century, to be raised at the express wish of the sovereign.

One of the most treasured possessions in the officers' mess at The Wood is a silver-framed page of the Visitors' Book, dated 24th October 1947. On this date the Troop, then known as The Riding Troop, R.H.A., was inspected by its royal begueter. On being requested to sign the Visitors' Book, His Majesty paused at the Troop's title. 'Riding Troop?' he queried. 'No—this is a mistake.' And with his own hand he scored out the word 'Riding' and wrote in 'King's'. It is claimed that this is the sole occasion on which a unit's name has been personally amended by a reigning sovereign.

THE admiring throngs who witnessed the first royal salute by the Troop in Hyde Park, in June 1946, had no conception of the difficulties which had beset the unit's formation and training. When the original note from the Palace was cogitated upon in the various departments of Whitehall, there were many who sought to have the battery raised as a mechanised unit. Nevertheless, the King's wish was explicit, and old Horse Gunners in high places—among them the Director of Royal Artillery, Major-General Sir Otto Lund—welcomed it as a happy opportunity to revive and preserve some of the vanished splendour of the Corps.

After prolonged deliberation, it was agreed that the battery should be horsed, manned, and equipped on the lines of a pre-mechanisation R.H.A. battery, complete with six 13-pounder guns, and that it would be permanently stationed at the St John's Wood barracks.

The question of a suitable title occupied much discussion. Normally, all horse artillery batteries are lettered, some earning honour titles for distinguished services, as, for example, 'J' (*Sidi Rezegh*) Battery, R.H.A.; but it was felt that in this case something more distinctive was called for. At length, since the battery was to be the only horsed unit in the Royal Artillery, it was resolved to resurrect one of the former titles of the disbanded Riding Establishment, R.A., which, raised in 1803, had been responsible for the teaching of equitation at the R.A. Depot, Woolwich. The new 'Riding Troop, R.H.A.', therefore, would take over the traditions and records of its ancient namesake, and thus it is that the Troop to-day bears as its crest the old device of a pillar-reined school horse surmounting the arms of the long-defunct Board of Ordnance. The title may not have been a particularly impressive one, but at least the choice of the word 'troop' was a happy inspiration. The term had been employed for all R.H.A. units until 1859, when they lost this distinction and have ever since been obliged to share the designation 'battery' with the rest of the Regiment.

The debating and approval of these details took time, and it was not until 12th March 1946 that Lieut.-Colonel H. K. Gillson, R.H.A., was finally summoned to the War Office and ordered to set about forming the Troop. He was directed, moreover, to have it fully equipped and drilled in time to fire the salute for the King's official birthday on June 13th. A formidable task. For nearly ten years the horse had been virtually non-existent in the Army, and those few that could be rounded up at short notice were soft from months of idleness at grass; gunners and drivers with mounted experience were either demobilised or dispersed far and wide among the mechanised batteries; the appropriate harness, mounted pattern service dress, and all the multitudinous battery stores cherished by horsed artillery quartermasters had long been handed back to Ordnance and forgotten.

However, the Royal Regiment has never been deterred by difficulties. Urgent memos from the R.A. Records Department very soon

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managed to produce from batteries at home and abroad a nucleus of suitable officers and men; a first draft of likely horses was received from the R.A.V.C. Remounts Department; unusually swift co-operation from Whitehall produced equipment and harness, and by the end of March this embryo had plunged into training at Shoeburyness, where the R.A. Experimental Establishment supplied quarters, clothing, rations and forage. Six weeks later—on 13th May—the Troop, now boasting 110 all ranks and 59 horses, moved to its rightful home in London, and the barracks at The Wood echoed once more to the clatter of hooves and the shrilling of trumpets.

But there was still much to be done before the first public performance, and barely a month to do it in. It was not before 10th June that the first full-scale dress rehearsal could be held. It says much for the industry and enthusiasm of all ranks, therefore, that on the appointed day—less than three months after it had been merely a name on paper—the Troop was able to parade properly equipped, mounted, and trained, and to gallop into action under many critical eyes in Hyde Park. The reverberations of the 41-gun royal salute on that 13th of June 1946 signalled not only the advent of another year in the King's reign, but also the opening of a fresh chapter in the history of the R.H.A.

TO-DAY, The King's Troop is allowed a permanent establishment of 6 officers, 131 other ranks, and 111 horses. Its six guns are of the pre-war horse artillery pattern, officially known as the Quick-Firing 13-pounder—the first modern type of quick-firing weapon to be introduced for the R.H.A., in 1904, and one which remained in service until mechanisation. Each gun and its complement of horses, drivers, and mounted detachment forms a subsection, commanded by a 'Number One', or sergeant; two subsections are grouped together under a subaltern, as a section, and the Troop is thus conveniently divided into three small units which can be, and often are, detached to function independently.

Officers for the Troop are selected from among the service batteries and are usually posted for a tour of two or three years. So far there has been little difficulty in finding the right type, with, among other qualifications, the necessary experience of horses. Though riding no longer forms part of the Horse

Gunner's duties, the Royal Regiment still manages to attract those who are familiar with the hunting-field or the show-jumping ring. Even so, every officer on joining is required to attend a six-months' equitation course at the Melton Mowbray Veterinary and Remount Training Centre of the R.A.V.C.

Before the war the picked men who made up the musical drive teams at the Royal Tournament were invariably old sweats with years of driving experience. Nowadays when The King's Troop enters the arena at Earl's Court it is as likely as not that there will be few among the drivers who can boast of more than three or four years' service, and a number may well be National Servicemen who, eighteen months previously, had never handled a pair of hairies in a team. In fact, some 40 per cent of the Troop's total strength are National Service youngsters, and, of the regulars, not many can spend more than four years or so at The Wood before being reposted to a mechanised battery for normal operational duties. In common with the officers, all other ranks are volunteers: no man joins the Troop against his will—nor does he remain in it long if he fails to measure up to the high standards of character, conduct, and turn-out demanded of him.

Although the Troop occasionally accepts men who have never sat in a saddle, most of the recruits, being volunteers, have had some riding experience in civilian life. Some, indeed, are already accomplished horsemen. Since 1950 the Troop has established a system of contact with provincial racing establishments whereby professional and apprentice jockeys called up may, if willing, be posted to The Wood for the whole of their service. This arrangement benefits both sides: the Troop is assured of a regular supply of keen horsemen, while the lads themselves are enabled to continue, and broaden, their riding experience while serving—though they may have to let down their stirrups and sit back in their army saddles. At present about 20 per cent of the Troop's gunners and drivers have, at some time or another, worked in racing-stables.

A QUESTION often asked of the Troop is: 'Where and how do you get your horses?' Put simply, the answer is that they come from that home of good stock—Ireland, where they are bought as green youngsters by the purchasing officers of the R.A.V.C., to be

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finally selected by the Troop on arrival at Melton Mowbray. The Government allows £100 for a team or detachment horse and £150 for an officer's charger. The type in demand for a troop-horse is the half or three-quarter bred animal of the middleweight hunter class, with plenty of bone, short back and, of course, good appearance. Bays and browns are preferred, standing about 15.3 hands.

In the normal course of events, some twelve remounts arrive at The Wood every year, usually as four- or five-year-olds, and their schooling, carried out entirely within the Troop, commences in September or October. For the detachment horses, such schooling follows the conventional methods laid down for army riding animals prior to mechanisation—with the exception that here they must be inured to the sights and sounds of London's streets, not to mention the discharge of 13-pounder blank ammunition at close quarters. For the team youngster, life is more complicated. He must first be introduced to draught harness, next to working as a pair with a team-mate, and, finally, taught to do his full share as 'lead', 'centre', or 'wheel', with or without a driver on his back, in the full team of six. Much of his early work will be done in the covered riding-school; later he will pound the turf of the Troop's practice driving-grounds at Wormwood Scrubs and Regent's Park.

THE training both of men and horses has three main objectives—which may be described as the chief functions of the Troop. First is the performance of all the necessary state ceremonial duties in London. Of these, the firing of salutes is probably the most familiar with the general public, since it is carried out as a regular routine on several occasions throughout the year, such as the various royal birthdays, anniversaries of the Accession to the Throne and the Coronation, and the State Opening of Parliament. With the exception of the last, all are fired in Hyde Park, and all are of 41 guns—why 41, no one is quite clear: it is just another of those service traditions whose origin has been lost. For the State Opening of Parliament, the guns come into action in St James's Park and, a feature unappreciated by the crowd, an elaborate and ingenious system of signalling ensures that the first round is fired at the exact moment that the sovereign sets foot upon the steps of the House.

The second function of the Troop is to provide a stimulus to army publicity and recruiting, and this is achieved in a number of ways—by the musical drives and displays performed at the Royal Tournament, at numerous military functions and tattoos, and at agricultural shows and other events throughout the country; by participation in recruiting exhibitions and rallies of old comrades and ex-servicemen, and in many other events designed to bring the soldier before the public eye. It may be noted that the Troop's displays are not restricted to official or service events. Subject to War Office approval, any show organisers can book The King's Troop for their programme—provided they are prepared to pay the cost of transport, accommodation, and rations for some 80 horses and 100 men.

The famous Musical Drive of the Horse Gunners has long formed a traditional climax in the Royal Tournaments. Originating with the purely operational driving competitions, devised rather as tests of skill and training than as public entertainment, the Drive as seen to-day was first included in the programme for 1896 and, performed by 'D' Battery R.H.A., proved an immediate success. Contemporary accounts recorded the 'roars of approval and unprecedented enthusiasm' evoked by the galloping teams, 'missing each other by inches', and the display, together with the Musical Ride by the Household Cavalry, was said to have established the Tournament.

To carry out the complex manoeuvres of circles, grids, and scissors with six teams at full gallop obviously calls for the highest degree of skill and judgment, and for superb schooling of horses. The cry of '*Leg over!*', signifying that one of the team horses has got a leg outside a slack trace, may not result in serious consequences on normal occasions, but in the precisely timed convolutions of a galloping drive it may well mean chaos, if not tragedy.

Training for the Drive goes on throughout the year, since with a fluctuating establishment new men must always be ready to take the place of those completing their service or posted elsewhere; each year sees nearly one-third of the Drive teams handled by newcomers. Starting in the riding-school, the recruit 'walks the course' dismounted, to memorise the figures; then he rides it, first with his pair of horses and later on in the complete team, at the walk and trot; finally

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come the full-scale practices at the gallop on the open expanses of Wormwood Scrubs and Regent's Park. The young driver will usually make his first public appearance as a 'centre'; not until his second year will he be experienced enough for promotion to the more responsible positions of 'lead' or 'wheel'. As might be expected, the lead driver is the senior member of the team, because upon him lies the responsibility for maintaining direction, interval, and pace.

The gun-number takes no part in the Drives, but he has his own role to play in the other functions. In addition to being a competent horseman, he must be thoroughly skilled in all the duties of gun drill and mounted and dismounted sword drill, while, to fit him for active service, he must undergo instruction with the 25-pounder field service armament and ammunition. It should be remembered that The King's Troop is no mere show-piece. As in the Household Cavalry, all ranks go into camp each year, there to continue more intensive training for operational duties.

The daily routine of riding and stables forms incidental training for the third function of the Troop—that of supplying a nucleus of experienced horsemen in the event of there being an operational demand, as in the last war, for the reintroduction of pack or draught artillery.

SINCE its formation, The King's Troop has distinguished itself in other than purely military activities. The name of Lieut.-Colonel Frank Weldon, who commanded from 1949 to 1954, is now widely known, not only as a steeplechase rider but also as the leader of Britain's victorious teams in the recent European Horse Trials at Basle and Windsor, while

the Troop's own show-jumping teams—officers' and other ranks'—have carried off many prizes in open events throughout the country.

A point of detail that immediately strikes a visitor to The Wood is the absence of battle-dress. When not on ceremonial duty the men wear the neat pre-war mounted pattern S.D. uniform of peaked cap, tunic, and breeches and puttees (or trousers when dismounted), the tunic being adorned with the bulbous ball-buttons which have remained a distinctive feature of the Horse Gunner's attire for more than 150 years. The full dress itself, with the beplumed busby and gold-laced jacket, is generally accepted as one of the smartest yet most practical and comfortable forms of ceremonial wear ever designed for a mounted soldier. Originating, in 1793, as a modified pattern of Light Dragoon uniform, it has changed remarkably little since 1837, when a somewhat top-heavy and cumbrous shako was replaced by the busby. And here let it be stressed that, despite popular conceptions, the R.H.A. busby is *not* a bearskin! The actual material is black sable for officers and sealskin for other ranks.

It is inevitable that the Troop, being continually in the public eye, should have earned during its yet brief existence a prestige rarely enjoyed by any but centuries-old units. But this prestige is based not merely on pageantry and display. The King's Troop may rightly be described as the living symbol of all the ancient and honoured traditions of the Royal Horse Artillery, and as such performs a service more valuable than any of its official functions. Frederick the Great is said to have remarked: 'The fighting spirit of a soldier, of a regiment, of an army, is fed by and flourishes on tradition.' Nowhere is this more true than in the British Army.

Seeds

*Through the patient growth of days
Seeds have soared their spiral ways,
Till in mist of tender green
The triumphal flowers are seen.*

*Little, patient, striving things,
Stirring from their hidden springs—
Would our thoughts could bloom in deeds
Beautiful as flowering seeds.*

IRENE H. LEWIS.



The Unimportant Man

MOLLY CASTLE

STANDING in the entrance to her sister Bettina's party, one of the very first of the London season, Abigail had an uneasy feeling that she didn't really belong there—which was absurd, she scolded herself. If she didn't belong here, then she belonged nowhere at all.

But both her sisters had the same idea about her. 'Look at her,' sighed Bettina to their older sister, Elinor. 'She's out of this world. Sometimes you'd think she was five instead of twenty-five. She looks like a grown woman all right—but she has the emotional development of an infant. We didn't bring her up properly.'

'We were too young ourselves when Mummy died.'

'And Nanny was too old.'

People who had glanced up when Abigail came in—and almost everybody had—had seen a beautiful young woman, expensively dressed and groomed, with breeding, taste, charm. But there was also about her another more indefinable quality, which perhaps was only obvious to the more discerning.

'It's that sort of lost look,' suggested Elinor. 'You'd think she didn't know her way round at all.'

'And goodness knows,' answered Bettina,

'she ought to be able to find it blindfold with her hands tied behind her back.'

'Exactly what I mean,' answered Elinor. 'But why should that be necessary? And what did she come alone for? When I left the house I understood she was to be called for. Whom did you ask to meet her?'

'Everybody,' answered Bettina briefly.

By that Elinor correctly took her to mean every unattached male famous enough, rich enough, titled enough, or brilliant enough to be anyone. Bettina was a very successful hunter of lions.

Bettina crossed the room to rescue her sister Abigail. 'You all know my sister, Abigail Adams,' she announced.

They all did, of course, though some of them only by reputation, as the youngest of those three famous beauties, the Adams sisters, who had been born with diamond spoons in their mouths and who looked good enough to eat.

Abigail stood for a second longer, and then people surged round her.

AFTER the atmosphere had cleared a little Abigail found that she was talking to a man of about thirty, whose name, he told her,

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was Hugh Keeler. He was of medium height, with a rather thin face and a high forehead. He had nice eyes. She had never heard of him, and he looked undistinguished, but you couldn't always tell by that.

'Who can he be?' she asked herself. But there he was, at her sister Bettina's, so he must be somebody important—and you just couldn't go round asking famous people what they were famous for.

They stood for a while, talking. Nobody ever sat down at Bettina's. For one thing, she always asked far more people than even her enormous reception rooms could comfortably hold. In addition, people were constantly coming and going, giving the effect of impermanence, as if it wasn't worth while to settle anywhere.

'And even if you did,' reflected Abigail, 'you'd probably get trampled to death.'

'Hm?' he inquired.

'Sit down, I meant,' said Abigail.

'All right,' he said. 'Let's.'

So they did.

He talked a good deal, but she didn't seem to learn anything about him.

'What do you do?' she asked at last, curiosity overcoming discretion.

However, he accepted her question as normal. 'I'm in business,' he said.

'A family business?'

'No. Just my own.'

'But who are you?' she puzzled.

'My name's Hugh Keeler.'

'Yes, I know that.' She looked bewildered.

'Is everyone here necessarily important?' he asked gently.

She tried not to blush. 'Well, my sister does like her guests to be famous. I suppose most of them are.'

'Even that one?' he asked, indicating a man a little to one side of the crowd, an obvious onlooker.

Abigail laughed. 'Oh yes, especially him. He's very important. He's the host. That's my brother-in-law, Paul. A famous writer. You remember *The Fox and the Firebrand*, don't you?'

She saw her sister Bettina swooping towards her and she excused herself and whispered to Bettina: 'Just exactly who—?'

Bettina answered distractedly—square pegs always upset her: 'Darling, I don't know. The Bagleys brought him, but they didn't explain why. I suppose he's somebody new, but, look, sweetie, I want you to meet—' and

she swept Abigail over to a young man who had just crossed the Atlantic alone in a sailboat and was painting a picture about it.

Abigail glanced over to where she had left Hugh Keeler, but he was talking to someone else now. He didn't seem to have noticed that the Adams sisters had turned him down. Abigail suddenly felt lost again.

FOR the rest of the evening Abigail met and talked with and did all the right things by a variety of famous and eligible men, but through it all she was still lonely. She was different from her sisters. She was like a trained circus seal who went through all its tricks with adroitness, and accepted the rewarding fish—but all the time nostalgically longed only for a cool pond in which to dive.

Then something rather strange happened. When it came time to leave, it was Hugh Keeler who was waiting for her. It was almost as if he were a husband who had taken his wife to a party, waited around while she talked to people and enjoyed herself, then, in the normal course of events, took her home.

Except for that, all resemblance to a husband ended. Hugh left her at Elinor's door in Grosvenor Street, having first inserted her key in the lock for her. He didn't ask permission to telephone.

He did phone, though, the next morning. Of course, there was nothing unusual about that. Men who took her home from parties always rang up the next day to inquire how she was. The only unusual thing was her feeling that Hugh really wanted to know.

A few days later he invited her to have cocktails with some friends of his. They were pleasant, ordinary people, who lived in a pleasant, ordinary flat in Kensington. Abigail supposed that Hugh had invited her in order to show her off, only it appeared they had scarcely heard of her either, or at any rate were quite unimpressed with what they had heard.

'It's nice to meet a friend of Hugh's,' the wife told her, and she saw that she was welcome for that reason, not because she was one of the famous Adams sisters whom they could later boast they'd entertained. It was a strange experience for Abigail who was not used to being anonymous—or even just herself. Unlike her sisters, who would have hated every moment of it, she thoroughly enjoyed the evening, even though she couldn't make it

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out. For instance, after the party they all ate a sandwich and then went to a cinema. It wasn't a preview or a first night or even a first run. Hugh didn't even hold her hand during the love scenes.

'What does he want?' she asked herself, adding with her dutifully conditioned reflexes, and in Bettina's voice: 'So this is how the other half lives!' But her own inner voice, not quite recognisable, because she heard it so seldom, added: 'Nice. I like it.'

IT was a week before Abigail saw Hugh again. During that week her sisters seemed more than ever determined to organise her life, and her sense of duty prodded her to try to oblige them. Her sisters, she knew, were doing their best for her. From her earliest childhood they had offered her the stars to play with. The young men they had produced for her, even before the bands were off her teeth, had been heirs to dukedoms, to newspaper empires, or to large industrial plants. Or else they had written or painted something successfully or flown faster than anyone else. Unlike her sisters, who usually married them, Abigail never quite knew what to do with her celebrities once acquired. But there was one thing about stars, she had found—if you let go of them even for a second, they snapped right back into the firmament as if they were tied to a piece of elastic. It gave her sisters a lot of trouble constantly finding a fresh supply for her. Now there were all sorts of new ones, all rich or famous or distinguished. Abigail tried hard to pick one of them out and do something about him, but she began to feel quite a resistance against this parade of men, either collectively or individually. She could never seem to tell them apart.

'You should marry at least once,' said Elinor.

'So that I'll get a taste for it,' said Abigail dreamily. 'Like caviar. Remember how you tried to get me used to caviar at Mummy's At Home parties? And I could never get over the idea it was going to be sweet, like raspberry jam.'

'You spat it out,' recalled Elinor.

'Right across the room,' giggled Bettina. 'But you like it now, don't you?'

'I'd still rather have raspberry jam,' said Abigail.

That evening when Hugh called for her to take her skating in Chelsea she told him: 'My

sister Elinor thinks it is very neurotic of me not to get married.'

He looked out of the tall French-windows at the street-lights below. 'Such a pretty glass-house she lives in, too.'

And after they had finished skating and were eating bacon and eggs in a Lyons, Abigail looked at Hugh, and she had the feeling for a moment that perhaps he really liked her—not who she was, and not even what she was, but herself, personally. And, what was even stranger, the feeling persisted, even though, a second later, Hugh looked at her consideringly and said: 'The funny thing is you're not even my type.'

'Oh,' she was a little crushed, though it was just what Bettina would have said about him. 'I felt almost as if I were,' she said a little sadly.

He smiled. 'Well, perhaps you are, underneath all the gift wrapping. You're such a fancy package that it's hard to find out what goes on underneath. You don't even know yourself.'

'I suppose I was never interested enough to take off the ribbons,' said Abigail, 'and look in the box.'

'Or maybe you were afraid there was nothing real inside,' he countered.

WHEN Abigail got home Elinor and Bettina were waiting for her, and when she told them where she'd been, Elinor said: 'But, darling! Skating? So uninspired.' And Bettina asked: 'What on earth do you talk to him about? Such an ordinary young man!'

Abigail tried to think what they had talked about besides themselves, but there was really nothing that made an interesting story. She thought of the conversational coinage at her sisters' dinner-tables. At Elinor's: 'A man I met last night who was very close to the Prime Minister told me—' Or at Bettina's: 'The Princess was wild about the score, she asked Noël to play it for her himself.' And she remembered Hugh saying that bacon and eggs tasted very good after so much exercise, and she remembered him saying that he liked old Marx Brothers' pictures, and she remembered that he'd promised to take her, some day, to Brighton, but she couldn't tell Bettina any of that.

'He isn't anybody, and he's not even especially good-looking,' Bettina pointed out. She was annoyed that Abigail had met the

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undistinguished one at her own house, and she was especially put out with her friends the Bagleys, who had never offered any satisfactory explanation for having brought Hugh Keeler to the party in the first place, except that they'd needed an extra man.

'He isn't even ugly,' wailed Elinor, who had once, very briefly, been interested in a boxer with a broken nose and butterflies on his tie. But, of course, he'd been a very important boxer, who had almost, though not quite, won the World Heavyweight Championship.

'What do you see in him?' asked Bettina.

'Well, it's just that—' Abigail broke off helplessly.

'That what?' Elinor probed.

'That—' Abigail made a bewildered gesture. 'That—when I'm with him I feel as if I *liked* myself.' She was as surprised as her sisters to hear herself say this, but just getting it out gave her a wonderful light feeling, as if she were floating.

'Well, goodness,' exclaimed Bettina, 'why on earth shouldn't you?' She herself had quite a crush on Bettina.

A FEW evenings later Abigail was sitting with Hugh in a little riverside pub where sailors from the French line were accustomed to gather. They were drinking Pernod, and Abigail was hungry, but Hugh hadn't suggested dinner. He appeared preoccupied. Then suddenly he glanced up, and the look seemed to run through the back of her eyes and down her spine. He asked: 'Have you ever been in love?'

She was startled. 'Why I—I suppose so,' she said.

'Don't you *know*?'

'I don't remember,' she said defensively.

He looked at her with one eyebrow raised.

'I've been engaged,' she said, half apologising.

She'd been engaged several times, but not just lately. When she'd been younger, it had always seemed so much easier to drift along with the tide. She'd never been so young, though, that she'd drifted over the dam.

'Why didn't you marry any of them?'

'Well—' It had been a long time now since she had asked herself that question. 'I don't exactly know.'

'None of them was exactly right?'

'All of them were exactly right—my sisters said,' she answered.

'What did they know about it?'

'My sisters always marry successfully,' said Abigail. 'Their marriages are always brilliant.'

'And then they live happily ever after—until divorce do them part?' suggested Hugh. 'And where are they now, your sisters' husbands?'

'Don't you know?' asked Abigail. 'Elinor's is in the Cabinet and Bettina's is almost always in the news.'

'Of course! Our host at that party.'

'Paul is really a prince, or at least his father was—a tenth cousin to the Czar or something—but he dropped the title when he became a British subject. Bettina and his lecture agents still use it, though, whenever it seems useful.'

'Do you like him?' asked Hugh.

'Paul's all right,' said Abigail. 'I hardly know him, really. I just see him about, you know.'

Perhaps, she thought now, that was a mistake. She had a sudden feeling that she might have quite a lot in common with her brother-in-law if she ever stopped still long enough to get to know him. She'd never thought of it before, but she saw now that he, too, was probably lonely.

'Were you?' she asked.

'Was I what?'

'Were you ever in love?'

'Yes, once,' he said. 'And I remember it very well indeed.'

'Oh,' said Abigail, a queer, unrecognised sensation catching at her throat. 'What happened?'

'She was killed,' he said. 'Motor accident. She was on her way to meet me. They said she was driving too fast. It's a long time ago now.'

'Oh,' she repeated, feeling helpless. 'I'm—I'm sorry.'

'So you see,' he said, staring into his glass, 'that's how I know how it would be with you.'

'With me?' she repeated. 'Me?' She wasn't quite sure what he meant, but she wanted to know.

So many crowded feelings pushed their way through Abigail that she didn't know which one to examine first. It wasn't possible that he could be falling in love with her. And yet—'Why *not*?' she demanded almost angrily, as if she were arguing with someone. Men usually fell in love with her, for a time, anyway, until they found out that underneath the beautiful and famous façade of Abigail Adams was just a home girl who had no talent

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for fame and was not even impressed by it either.

'You're becoming a problem,' said Hugh.

'I am? In what way?'

'I like you too much.'

'What kind of a problem is *that*?' she asked. It sounded good to her.

'I've been thinking a lot about it. We're not in the same league, your life has been too different, we'd never be able to work it out. I wouldn't be able to give you any of the things you're used to, and you wouldn't be happy with me.'

'Oh dear,' she sighed helplessly. She might have realised that he was protesting too much if she hadn't for weeks now been trying to sell herself the same arguments. 'I wasn't *very* used to them,' she said in a small voice.

'You've had them all your life. So you see, it would never work out.'

'Wouldn't it?' she asked bleakly, feeling like a jigsaw puzzle that nobody could solve. Maybe some of the pieces were missing. 'I think I'll go home now,' she said. She was afraid she was going to cry. And, after all, it was nothing to cry about. Things were the way they were and she couldn't change them.

ELINOR'S maid was packing when Abigail reached the house. Abigail had forgotten by now that she was hungry and had had no dinner. 'Where are we going?' she asked.

'We're leaving for Scotland early tomorrow morning. The Laird's giving a ball—Ian's 21st birthday—and he's asked me to give a dinner-party first. There'll be lots of interesting people, Elinor replied.'

'Mm,' Abigail murmured. Interesting is as interesting does, she thought, adding to herself that even if it *was* something to cry about, crying wouldn't really solve anything, whereas Scotland might. Scotland was at least several train hours' less chance of running into Hugh or of waiting for the telephone to ring—or even of haunting places where he just might be but never was. So she watched the maid pack her clothes, and when it was all done, and she was alone, she threw herself down on the bed and burst into tears.

She had been in Scotland a week, and all the time it was becoming increasingly impossible to pretend to herself that she was really there. All of her, except her actual physical presence, had obstinately remained behind in London.

One afternoon she was sitting in the library

when her brother-in-law came in. It wasn't the brother-in-law, the Minister, whose house this was. It was Paul, who was married to Bettina. 'Why hello, Paul,' she said, feeling an unexpected surge of friendliness towards him. 'What are you doing? Where's Bettina?'

'She took the morning train to London,' said Paul. 'She's—er—should we say—displeased with me.' He smiled, and for a moment it was almost as if Hugh was looking at her.

She felt alive. And so she smiled back and saw that Paul seemed different. 'What's the matter, Paul? Something is worrying you.'

She could see he was surprised, and she knew why. She had never noticed before what people were feeling. Probably because almost everyone she knew had been so wrapped up in clouds of glory that she'd never been able to see the man for the mist.

'I've just finished another book,' he said. 'I wrote it because I wanted to write it—because I needed to write it—but it's no good at all for the Book Clubs or America or the movies or the best-seller lists.'

'Or Bettina,' finished Abigail. 'Why, Paul,' she said suddenly. 'You won't be important any more, perhaps. You won't be a star, and even now your elastic is slipping. You won't be up there in the sky out of reach, you'll be down on the ground where I can talk to you.' And she realised how very much she had wanted to tell somebody the way she felt about Hugh—or even to say his name out loud.

Paul started to laugh. 'Well,' he said, taking her hand, 'I must say I never noticed it before, but you're real, too. What's it all about?'

So she told him about Hugh, and he understood perfectly. He said that he remembered Hugh very well at the party and had thought at the time that he was the only one there who looked as if he'd ever done anything worth while. 'But what are you and I doing in this family?' he asked.

'Misfits,' said Abigail happily. 'Why don't we telephone London and tell them? I suppose Bettina's there by now?'

'I suppose she is. But don't let's phone. Let's just go there and tell them,' he suggested.

When they reached Euston they decided to phone after all. They made for the phone-booths and each took one. Abigail dialled Hugh's office number. 'Paul thought I should ring you up,' she said.

THE PROBLEM OF ODOURS

'Who's Paul?' asked Hugh.

'My brother-in-law. Don't you remember? By now, though, he's probably my ex-brother-in-law.'

'The one you never could see for the clouds of glory?'

'Yes, but, now they've rolled away, it turns out that he's quite real, too.'

'Too?' he asked.

'Yes,' said Abigail. 'Like me. And, of course, you. Us.'

'When did you find *that* out?' asked Hugh.

'Paul told me. When did you?'

'I knew it the whole time,' he answered, 'but it wouldn't have been the least bit of

good unless you had found it out for yourself.'

Paul tapped on the glass of the booth and she pushed open the door. He leaned out of his booth, his hand over the receiver. 'Bettina wants to know what in the world you find to like about this joker, Hugh,' he asked her.

'Tell her,' said Abigail, 'that I don't like anything about him—'

'Who are you talking to *now*?' interrupted Hugh.

'I'm talking to Paul,' answered Abigail, 'but you can listen, darling.—Paul, tell my sister that I don't like anything *about* Hugh. That's what makes it so wonderful. I just like *him*.'

The Problem of Odours

LANGSTON DAY

A DRAWING published in *Punch* in 1849 showed a top-hatted gentleman walking through the streets of London wearing a strange gas-mask terminating in a 10-foot stand-pipe—the idea being to enable the wearer 'to breathe the upper and purer currents of air in the neighbourhood of our slaughter-houses, cattle-markets, graveyards, bone-boilers, soapmakers, and catgut manufacturers.'

In some of Gillray's and Rowlandson's cartoons you can almost feel the fetid atmosphere. The odours which assailed the nostrils of our ancestors must have been appalling; yet in a single morning a town-dweller of to-day might easily encounter a couple of dozen smells which were unknown to our great-grandfathers—for example, from creosolic and washing compounds, the exhausts of diesel-engines, gases from furnaces and foundries, disinfectants. The fact that most of us are inured to them does not mean that they do not exist. There are some people who say they are able to distinguish 4000 separate odours,

and it is known that the ever-growing list of detectable odours already runs into tens of thousands.

As urbanisation spreads, it seems likely that science will have to pay more and more attention to the elimination of smells, but from the very start there are unusual difficulties. In spite of Pollard's 'scent meter', which is said to be very popular among fox hunters, and strange instruments in America, such as the 'stinkometer', which is a chemical method of assessing the freshness of foods, no one has yet been able to measure a smell. Nor, for that matter, has anyone yet succeeded in showing what a smell *is*.

At present there are two theories about the latter problem. One is that odoriferous substances emit particles or corpuscles, usually in a gaseous form. The other maintains that the molecules of smelly substances emit high-frequency radiations which are picked up by the pigment granules in the receptors of our nasal organs. Each of these theories only partially fits the facts—which is very similar to

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the impasse that physicists have reached where light-rays are concerned.

How is it that each odour seems to correspond to a particular wavelength of molecular vibration, and yet that odours travel down-wind? From a common-sense point of view it seems to us quite certain that smells are gaseous. Yet if only chemistry is involved, how is it possible to smell ethyl mercaptan when only two billionths of a gramme is present in a single sniff of air? And how can musk continue to give off an odour for years without any appreciable loss of weight? It seems most probable that our olfactory brain is an extremely complex and delicate electronic system. It contains an immense number of pigment granules, each of which acts like a radio receiving-set for some particular odour, while the olfactory bulb is an amplifier.

WE are apt to regard odours as something real and substantial, but in fact it is not quite so simple as this. The only guides as to whether they exist or not are our noses; and yet in certain disorders patients are saddled with chronic impressions of odours which others cannot smell at all. Perhaps some stimulus *is* reaching them. On the other hand, there are thought to be olfactory hallucinations.

The electrical stimulus of an odour is translated by the human organism into a sensory impression, and here we come upon another curious fact. What is pleasant for one person is unpleasant for another, and vice versa. Many orientals are fond of valerian, which is abhorrent to westerners. When a British Test team visited India and played a match against one of the states ruled over by an Indian Prince they shared the same changing-room as their opponents. The weather, of course, was hot. After enduring it for some time, the Captain with extreme diffidence asked the Rajah if they could have a separate changing-room. With a twinkle in his eye, the Rajah replied that the Indian team had just approached him with the same request!

The Japanese like the smell of camphor and borneol, while the Phœnician ladies are said to have put pepper in their perfumes. If we could be miraculously transported to the Court of Louis XVI, we should be overpowered by strange perfumes of spices and incense-like aromatics. The nose of modern civilised man, we think, is more sensitive than that of his ancestors. But is it really so

sensitive? Lumpholtz recorded that certain tribes in Queensland hunted boars by smell, and Humboldt said that by their noses alone the Indians of Peru could follow human trails. Some people believe that the strange accessory olfactory system which is present in the human embryo and is well developed in such creatures as the opossum may by some mysterious means be brought into use in certain adult human beings.

IN earlier times bad smells were not only very prevalent but also much feared by the doctors, who thought they gave rise to fevers and other maladies. It was the fashion to believe in 'effluvia' and 'miasmas', which were exhalations from marshes, cesspits, and so on, usually associated with fetid odours. But during a heat-wave in 1858 this theory of death lurking in corruption was given its *coup de grâce* by an extraordinary and most unpleasant occurrence. The Thames became a gigantic cesspool, reeking so powerfully that it almost held up business in the House of Commons. At length the nuisance was investigated by a parliamentary committee, ironically nicknamed a 'Smelling Expedition'. *Punch* suggested that its members should be rewarded by an Order of Nasal Valour. If the current medical theory was correct, there should have been an epidemic, but, to the general astonishment, the health of Londoners remained unusually good!

Doctors now believe that bad smells do not injure the health, though they may cause great annoyance. There is a very close connection between smells and emotions. Lawyers have noticed that in court cases concerned with complaints about noisome odours the plaintiffs are often in an unusual state of mental perturbation, while, of course, perfumes and incense induce feelings which are well known to every woman and to High Church priests.

In times when personal hygiene was primitive according to present-day notions and clothes were voluminous, the atmosphere of salons must have been somewhat oppressive. The usual method of obviating odours was to mask them by strong perfumes, such as Arabian oils, but this was rather like trying to jam a radio broadcast. In the earlier days of the underground railways strong deodorants were used to overcome the smell of soot and sulphur, and creosote was mixed with the reeking fish-oils used in tile cement. The

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results were some of the worst nasal afflictions which the public has ever had to endure.

IMEDIATELY after the First World War many commodities smelled abominably, and even to-day some synthetic products are not fully deodorised. But the public has little idea of how much it would suffer if we had uncontrolled compounding of odours. The fact is that, although we still do not know what smells *are*, we have learned to manipulate them much more cleverly. In spite of advances in applied chemistry which produce multitudes of odours never before sniffed by the nose of man, we can not only blend these odours harmoniously but also counteract them by a method known as 'pairing'.

During the last war an American soldier, disliking the taste of chlorinated water, dropped a vanillin tablet into his mug. To his astonishment it removed not only the taste of chlorine but also that of the vanillin. Taste and smell are, of course, closely related: the two ingredients had cancelled each other out. This principle of pairing had been discovered by the German chemist Zwaardemaker at the turn of the century, but like many discoveries it had lain dormant. Some neutralising pairs of smells are those of rubber and cedarwood, wax and balsam, camphor and eau de Cologne. The well-known Airwick air-purifier contains a number of pairing odours.

The usual method of using these counter-odorants is to project them through vaporising sprays, as for instance into the chimneys of fat-rendering plants, or canning, reducing, or soap-boiling factories. Neutralising of odours is now applied successfully to the manufacture of rubber, textiles, glues, paints, and many other things. Ozone is a wonderful destroyer of smells, though it is a moot point whether it is a true neutraliser, and not merely a masking agent. There are also substances which suck up odours as a sponge sucks up water. The best of these is activated carbon.

Activation means the removal of certain impurities, a process which increases the efficacy of the carbon from 50 to 100 times over. Within the carbon granules there are immense numbers of minute cavities or capillaries which absorb the odours as a piece of blotting-paper mops up ink. On this analogy, a cubic inch of high-grade coconut-shell carbon is equivalent to about 5 acres of blotting-paper. This kind of carbon was used

in both wars for gas-masks, and it now figures in air-conditioning plants.

The newest method of annulling odours is to imitate nature, which makes use of chlorophyll in conjunction with sunlight. Actually it is the derivatives of chlorophyll which are being tried out with such promising results. It is also thought possible that we may be able to irradiate noisome gases with the correct neutralising frequencies and change the molecules so as to render them innocuous. Something of this kind happens under the action of sunlight: sunlight has long been known as one of the best deodorants.

ALL this refers to odours which, unless they are dealt with, would be thrown on to the air. But one of the many difficulties facing manufacturers, particularly of foodstuffs, is the danger of their goods picking up foreign odours in transit. The foreign odour need not even be an unpleasant one, but if it is in the wrong place its effect may be disastrous.

Where has the odour come from? For tracking down smells acquired in transit a sort of Scotland Yard exists in the Printing, Packaging, and Allied Trades Research Association. Usually the detective work begins with placing each of the suspected packaging materials in an airtight glass jar and leaving the jars stoppered overnight. Next morning a member of a smelling team sniffs the contents of one of the jars until he is overcome with 'odour fatigue' and can no longer register this particular smell. He then sniffs the complaint package. If he can smell nothing, the offending odour is probably the same as that in the jar for which his nose is fatigued, but if not, it is another odour which he is not yet inured to. By this method of trial and elimination the trouble can be quickly traced.

On the other hand, even an unpleasant smell can be put to good use if it is in the right place. An American firm which manufactures synthetic sponges has offered to turn out a sponge smelling so strongly and durably of ripe cheese that it could serve as a permanent rat-bait.

Some years ago the American Bureau of Mines injected ethyl mercaptan—which smells of rotten cabbages and sewer-gas—into the gas mains in an attempt to locate leaks. Since the public had not been warned, the results were rather disconcerting. One man had a

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row with his butcher for supplying him with bad meat. A woman threw away all her husband's shoes, and another insisted that her husband should immediately have a bath. Other householders tore up their floorboards and ransacked their basements.

It has been suggested that unpleasant odours should be added to insecticides and other poisons as a safety-precaution, and successful tests have been made in mines with butyl and ethyl mercaptan to broadcast alarm signals to miners working underground.

As to odours of a more pleasant kind, an enormous number of goods in household and general use are scented as a matter of course. But for this, we might be horrified by the smells emanating from our inkpots and notepapers, our textiles, our wall-paints, and from many other apparently innocent sources.

IN the future we are likely to find scents figuring in the promotional sphere in ways which are at present unknown. The posters

which advertise families sitting greedily round the dinner-table while mother brings in a bowl of some proprietary brand of soup may gain in sales appeal by actually smelling of soup, while advertisements for mountain hostels will no doubt quicken our desire for travel by assailing our nostrils with a strong odour of pine-trees.

A news article which appeared as early as 1940 described what was probably the first attempt to combine the sense of smell with that of sight and hearing in a cinefilm. 'Last year in Berne, Switzerland, two chemists invited newspaper-men to attend the first motion-picture enhanced with scent. While the lover guided his lass through hayfields, the scent of new-mown hay filled the auditorium, and when he handed her a bunch of violets, you could smell them. These inventors claim that it takes no magic to introduce—and eliminate—a thousand odours through modern air-conditioning systems.' It seems likely that after the Silents and the Talkies, we are about to pass on to the Smellies.

The Spaniel and the Surviving Rabbit

R. N. STEWART

I'M getting to be an old spaniel now, and what I like to do is to sit in the sun, eat, and scratch. But I also like to trot slowly over my old hunting-grounds. You know, the places where my Master and I used to go shooting. Just to remember the old days . . . Ah, what fun we had!

Well, yesterday I was feeling pretty good. Even my ticks were not quite so tiresome as they usually are on a June morning. Master was busy with that young bitch he's got, who's supposed to take my place. Pops, she's called. Silly name, but not of my choosing.

Mind you, she's not bad for a child, but she's got a lot to learn yet. Of course, I'm supposed to teach her, but this morning it was too hot for lessons, so I wandered off on my own. I took good care that Master did not see me slide off. If he had, he would have called me back, and I couldn't well pretend not to hear, even though I'm getting rather deaf. You see, with that child Pops about, I have to set an example, and no good spaniel ever sets a bad one.

Well, I made a good getaway. I slipped through the fence where the bracken was

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highest and was off to the river. I like it by the river. Not only is it cooler, but in the days when the rabbits were plentiful there were lots of them just there. Great times I had. I don't mind saying now that it wasn't very often that I caught one in full chase, but I pounced on quite a few while they were sleeping in their forms. Mind you, I did not kill them. No good spaniel ever does that. I brought them to Master and put them unhurt into his hand, or laid them at his feet.

Once or twice when he was in the drawing-room I took rabbits in there, but that was not very popular. The rabbits, poor things, got bewildered and ran round the room, and, as we all joined in the chase, things used to get knocked over. It was all great fun, but not at all to the liking of the Mistress. But there, I'm getting talkative.

WHEN I got to the riverbank I smelt a strange yet vaguely familiar smell. 'That smells very like rabbit to me,' I said to myself. 'But it can't be—they're all dead, ever since the myxomatosis came.' Still, the scent was very strong, and I followed it, and I could scarcely believe my eyes when I turned round a bramble-bush, and there was a fat old rabbit sitting up and scratching his ears. I stopped dead in my tracks.

'Huh, it's you, is it,' he said.

'Why,' I cried, 'if it isn't old Cotton Tail!' You see, I had once caught old Cotton Tail several years ago when he was only half-grown, and had given him to the Master, who had let him go, so Cotton Tail was never frightened of me again, though he was scared of other dogs. 'But, Cotton Tail,' I went on, 'I thought you were dead long ago.'

'Humph, shows all you know. Mind, I'm not saying I wasn't lucky, but I'm still here.'

'Tell me about it,' I said.

'Well, it's a long story. You remember how many of us there were before the Great Plague came—hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of us—too many, in fact. Why, I could barely get a bite at a bit of new grass before it had been snatched by one of the youngsters. Well, then IT came. I had heard of the disease some time before it got here. Never mind how I heard. I realised that it was serious, so I went off to a lonely cairn up in the corrie, and there I made myself a home. No, I didn't take any of my family with me. How could I? If I had taken one, I would

have had seven hundred clamouring for admission.'

'What, did you have seven hundred children?'

'My dear Fatty, I don't think I can tell you how many I had. But you know, little things like families—they come, they go. No, I wasn't going to let any of 'em know where my hideout would be. You at your age should appreciate that.'

Of course, when Cotton Tail put it like that I realised he was talking sound common-sense.

'Yes,' he went on, 'it was a very snug little place, right under a big rock, with a sandy floor and two doors. I like a sandy floor, doesn't get damp and sticky in wet weather as mud does, but you have to be careful digging in sand, because if you go too wide or too deep it falls in. Anyway, I made it just right for one, and I did not want any of my fourteen wives butting in.'

'What, you had fourteen wives all at one time?'

'Well, it may have been eighteen at that time, but I forget now. Oh yes, they were quite nice rabbit girls, and I was sorry I had to leave them, but, you know, it was the only thing I could do.

WELL, the myxomatosis came, and it was terrible. I'm sure I lost six hundred and ninety nine of my living children. Maybe I lost the seven-hundredth as well—and all my wives. Oh yes, I cried a bit, but, you know, when you lose over seven hundred relations it isn't the same as losing an only child or the first dozen or so.

'I stayed up in the corrie for three months—in fact, till the cold weather came and the food on the hill got a bit short. Then I came down. What a scene it was! Dead bodies and bones lying all over the place. But what was far worse, all the foxes, stoats, weasels, wild cats, buzzards, hawks, and stray dogs were looking for food. I reckon I ran as big a risk in the first three days here as ever I had run from the Plague. Oh, I know you never used to eat us, but plenty of other folk did.

'Well, there I was wiping away a tear, when a sudden swoosh in the air, and I was nearly snapped up by a buzzard. Me, a full-grown rabbit of great experience. I can tell you it made me think. My own fault, of course. I should have been paying attention. However, I slipped him and got to ground, but instead

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of flying away, as buzzards usually did, he settled in a tree close by to see when I came out. Just fancy that. It showed how few of us there were left.

'However, I knew that burrow well enough, and it had several exits which the buzzard didn't know. So I went along those underground passages. They were badly neglected. Indeed, I had quite a struggle to get through at all, but I chose an exit right in the middle of a big bramble-bush—buzzards, you know, don't like brambles—and slipped away unseen.'

'And what are you doing now?' I asked.

'Well, we didn't all die, and I've found quite a nice young new wife and I'm raising another family. You see, it's my duty to repopulate the world with rabbits, but I find it's hard

work with only one wife. She nags a bit, too. After all, with a dozen and more you didn't notice the nagging of one of them—you just left her and took up with one in her good moods. Well, now I must be going. No, don't you try and chase me—you're far too fat these days, and I'm too old and precious to run risks. Just think if I were damaged or killed, rabbits would only be a memory.'

As I wandered home I pondered on what Cotton Tail had said and it all seemed to be true enough. In fact, I think Cotton Tail is a very gallant old rabbit, and I sincerely hope he raises his new family and has a rabbit monument erected to him on the riverbank. He deserves one.

Yes, it's the queerest morning I've had for some time.

Prayer for a Summer Morning

*Buttercups—distance on distance of them—
In the morning haze
More richly shining than the pearly sun;
Coppice and hedgerow prodigal with may;
And cuckoos—calling and calling of them;
All the day's stored honey, waiting,
For the hours to run.*

*Oh, perfect offering,
Still fields of maiden Time,
I pray
Let me give back no deed or thought
Less fair than this white may;
Or spend these opening hours
Less richly than those opening golden flowers,
But, constant as the cuckoo's floating chime,
Keep faith with these. Though less sublime,
Let my small makings be as finely wrought
As they, their purpose everywhere fulfil;
So blend the meadow's moments with the mind, until
This pearly sun, his splendour grown and done,
Takes his reluctant way
To make another garden in the sky.
Oh, then I pray
That, looking back
Down the long path he rays
Across the evening fields, may I
See shining there,
Unsullied as the buttercups of morning,
Bright, in the glory of the crowning way,
The memory, unclouded, of a summer day.*

EGAN MACKINLAY.



Desert Honeymoon

HENRY C. JAMES

I HAD known Alice Springs, which is a pinpoint of a township in the centre of Australia, and also the hundreds of miles of harsh desert north-west of it, for a long time before Arthur Henderson became engaged to Ruth, the daughter of Sam Jenson, the blind storekeeper at 'The Alice'. I had known it a long time even before the Americans built the real overland road the thousand-odd miles north to Darwin—but that road didn't really touch the desert; and I'd known it a long time before Nevil Shute used the idea and style of the little town of 'The Alice' as background for a novel.

I had been there twenty-three years before, when Sam Jenson went blind because of the sand and the sun; when his wife died because of what the desert did to her on the last trip that she and Sam ever made.

They had outstayed their welcome in the desert on that occasion, and all of us who were there at the time remembered it, just as we remembered, when we thought of it, that quite a few other men, over the last fifty years, had died out there—and some other men, a very few, had made fortunes.

So, after the first moment or so, it was really no surprise to me when Arthur Henderson came and told me that his future father-in-law

had been sitting on a fortune for twenty-three years. We'd all had those ideas. But old man Jenson had brought back samples on that last trip which could only have come from the reef we'd all known about, but which we had never been able to find. The only other two men who found it died before they could do anything with it—Lassiter was one, and Davidson was the other.

But Sam Jenson had mapped it exactly, and a few weeks before they were due to be married he gave the key of it to Arthur and his daughter—as a wedding-present.

Ruth wanted to have nothing to do with it, and wanted Arthur to have nothing to do with it—until he came to me, and we reminded her that the old man had been living with the idea of keeping it for her, and her husband, for twenty-three years, and that if he refused to accept it there would be only one label her father would put on him. It would be that he was afraid of the desert—that he was yellow.

It was entirely false as far as Arthur was concerned, but I didn't think Sam would stop to think. The boy was young, with thick, fair curly hair, and the hard light-blue eyes of the Australian bushman, but as tough as they come, and experienced—and he knew the desert. He knew it so well that, until Ruth

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put a stop to it, he had made a good living trapping the desert blood-finches and budgerigars at the almost unknown blackfellows' rockholes. But even that wasn't in the really dry, treacherous desert, where there was no water for hundreds of miles—nothing but shifting sand and scorching sun; a place where even the spinifex and the mulga couldn't make a living; a place where the old desert rats swore even the flies wouldn't follow you.

Arthur asked me to come with him, and I agreed. Like most men, I had no objection to the thought of picking up my share of a fortune; and I had been too long at 'The Alice' not to know the fortunes were still there. If this was one of them, I was quite happy to gamble for it.

But Ruth put her foot down again. The only way she would agree was if we postponed the trip until after the wedding—and if she came with us. It was a difficult situation, but, like most difficult situations, it worked out the way the lady suggested.

WE 'left The Alice' two days after the wedding, not in one truck, but in two—Arthur's thirty hundredweight and my old one. But they were both solid, well-looked-after, and well-equipped. We kept the whole expedition very quiet, because there were still fifty men at least who would have followed us at the merest whisper of that lost reef. There were, and are, fifty at least in 'The Alice' who still dream of desert fortunes, because civilisation hasn't touched the great desert yet—and it's not likely to.

Arthur went off with his bride on a supposedly bird-catching expedition, and I went in my truck supposedly to one of the big cattle-stations a few hundred miles to the north-east. I swung round a hundred-odd miles out, and cut across country back to the overland road, then took the north-west track that led to Randall Stafford's camel-station, where I met the other truck.

We went north-west again, crossed the dry sandy bed of the Launder River, which is nothing but a thousand-mile-long snake of white sand, loose and difficult to cross at the best of times. Sometime in the dawn of the continent it had been a river, but not even the blackfellows' folklore remembered it. A hundred and fifty miles north-west again, we turned direct west—just past the place of the giant anthills—and then we went by compass.

We'd expected to be gone not more than a week or ten days, and, with food, water, and petrol for three weeks, it was inconceivable that there could be any real danger. Except that the desert still had an odd trick up its sleeve that even I hadn't encountered before. But I didn't even dream about that—yet.

It was pleasant enough, even though in the daytime it was terrifically hot. But when you live in 'The Alice' you get used to heat; to the dry, windless days; to the metallic blue of the cloudless desert sky—day after day, week after week, month after month . . .

I left Arthur and Ruth as much alone as was possible, letting them enjoy each other, and the beauties of the desert—because it *can* be beautiful when you ignore the underlying treachery. The outcrops of hard brown rock which have defied the efforts of millions of years to wear them down, and the purple shadows on them; the mirages floating away in front of you and beckoning all the time; the serrated sandhills; the wedge-tailed eagle sailing round in placid circles above the odd mulga ridge and the occasional patch of tough acacia scrub—I let them enjoy it all, making myself into cook and bottle-washer, getting their meals for them, making their bed of spinifex turned upside down so that the spikes were towards the ground and the soft underneath made a bushman's mattress. Ruth accepted it magnificently—just as I am sure her mother had accepted it, and enjoyed it, twenty-three years before.

THE place we were making for, according to old man Jenson's map, was three hundred miles from where we turned direct west and about fifty miles past the ironstone outcrop which was known as Black Rocks. We found the place easily enough, or we found the vicinity of the place, but even after searching for a week, combing the sandhills fifty miles in every direction, we still found not the slightest trace of the flat deposit that the map described. It just wasn't there any more. The desert sand had swallowed it again, just as it had done after Davidson found it—and after Lassiter found it. There was nothing left to do but turn round, go back and face the old man with the information that the reef was still just a legend of 'The Alice', and the desert.

We were disappointed, of course; but Arthur and Ruth were still happy enough.

DESERT HONEYMOON

They'd done their best, and the old man would have to face it, and accept it. They'd had their desert honeymoon, and the happiness in their faces showed it had been all they had hoped for, or wanted—in spite of not finding the reef. It showed like that with Ruth particularly. She'd found happiness in the desert—just as her mother had done.

Perhaps that was what made me afraid, as we turned to go back. And when Arthur's truck blew up on us, with still two hundred miles to go to get out of the real desert, I was even more afraid—even though it was still possible, of course, to transfer everything we needed to my old truck.

IT was as hot as only that desert can be, hotter even than I could remember, and we were tired and silent. Losing Arthur's truck had taken a bit of the gilt off. The trip had started to become anticlimax—and there was to be more yet.

Ruth heard it first, when we stopped to boil the billy and make a cup of tea. It was just a low, very distant rumble of thunder behind us, to the west—and in the same direction there was a strange long cloud, low on the horizon. As the sun sank lower, it tinged the cloud with the gold we had been looking for.

The thunder continued, and the cloud rose further above the horizon. It was black and menacing—something I had never seen in the desert before, and an hour later it was almost overhead. It had come up so quietly, except for the occasional thunder, that if we hadn't been watching it we would never have noticed.

A little wind heralded the rain, blowing Ruth's hair round her face. It was just a few drops at first, until the next crack of lightning and thunder, which seemed to tear the sky open and let the torrent which had waited a century to overwhelm the desert fall in a solid mass of water.

In less than a minute it found its way through all the cracks of the driving compartment of my truck, where the three of us were sitting, so that we were wet through, as was everything else; and in five more minutes it had turned the desert into a sea of water as far as we could see in every direction. It had got dark by now, but the lightning lit up the surroundings, until for a split second it was as light as, even lighter than, day, but with a cold, different light.

I went on driving, until, after perhaps ten

more minutes, there was a desperate lurch at the rear of the truck, and we stopped, with the wheels spinning round in the wet sand. I got out—I couldn't have got wetter than I was, anyhow—and looked at the situation. For the time being—until the rain cleared away—we were hopelessly bogged. Arthur agreed with me that there was nothing to do but just to wait.

We couldn't even make tea, so we opened a tin of bully-beef and ate it with our fingers, as it was, because the last lot of damper I had baked was as sodden as before I'd put it in the camp oven.

AN hour later, the rain had gone. The sky was clear, and the stars, which always in the desert seem to come so low that you feel you should be able to reach upwards and grab a handful of them, were as bright and clean as ever they were—and the surface water had gone; the desert had soaked it up in a matter of minutes after the rain had stopped. But it hadn't soaked it deep enough, yet. The truck was still bogged, and we all knew it would stay like that until the sun came up next morning and dried out the desert properly.

We slept where we were, wet and uncomfortable; but we still weren't worried—and we still weren't worried when we made only twenty-odd miles the second day, lifting the bogged wheels of the truck out every few yards almost, but getting on a bit faster every hour as the sun dried out the track more and more. So there was still nothing to worry about—until, about the same time as on the first day, the storm came up again, in almost exactly the same way.

Again, for an hour the desert was a sea of water, after which the sky became clear once more, and the water, on the immediate surface, disappeared. But this time the water stayed just under the surface longer, in spite of the hot drying sun next morning, so that we made less than twenty miles on the third day. And when the storm came up again at exactly the same time as before, I knew we were in serious trouble.

On the fourth day the three of us were showing more sign than I liked of the strain and the work of lifting and pushing, lifting and pushing, the heavy truck. Ruth had the beginning of dysentery, and Arthur's face was thin and haggard. I knew mine must be the same. But still there was no let-up. The

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storm seemed to go away from us each evening in a huge circle, coming up behind us again the next day.

It went on for eight days, by which time Ruth was desperately ill, our food supplies, which had seemed more than adequate, had run out, and we were still many miles from even comparative safety.

WE got Ruth to sleep the last evening after the storm had gone, but there was no way of making either her or ourselves dry, and the constant wetting, and drying by the hot sun, I knew would only aggravate her dysentery, and make her condition more acute and dangerous. I remembered her mother. I knew Arthur was thinking the same things as I was thinking, but neither of us had the courage to put them into words, or even into really conscious thoughts.

Arthur said: 'We've got somehow to hit the Launder, and get across it.'

I knew that, too; but I knew the Launder was still more than fifty miles in front of us; and I knew when we came to it it would no longer be a mile-wide stretch of loose white sand, but a raging, roaring river, which had renewed itself after hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of years. The problem would be, even if and when we reached it, how to cross it. And both Arthur and I knew it. It looked as if the desert, which we were so sure we could defeat, had beaten us.

Of course, there was still one chance in a million that they would make arrangements to send an aeroplane out to look for us; but they wouldn't know in which direction to look; and they couldn't do very much about us even if they found us. Also, by the time officialdom and the thousand miles between 'The Alice' and Adelaide had both been overcome, it would be too late for us, particularly for Ruth. We still had to fight the desert with the only weapons we had—our experience, and guts.

There was a chance we weren't completely licked. Arthur remembered it, from one of his furthest out bird-trapping expeditions. He had gone up the Launder, a hundred miles past its nearest point to Randall Stafford's station, to a place where it took a big sweep to the north, opening out on the other side of a rock defile into what had obviously been, thousands of years ago, a lake. It might be—it certainly would be—a lake again, but on the

narrow end we might be able to float a raft across it.

I turned the truck direct south, and we hit the place the next day. We were still in the desert, but this time it was a desert of real water, spreading out as far as we could see to the west in a shallow lake, which presumably was the original beginning of the Launder back in the days when storms such as we had lived through had been more usual.

The lake emptied itself placidly enough into the actual river by way of a rocky headland of overhanging ironstone on one side and a wide firm sandbank on the other. Between them there was a channel of deep water, but there wasn't enough power behind the shallow water of the lake, even after all the rain, to make a rapid of it. If we could cross the narrow deep channel, we were on the same side of the desert as Randall Stafford's outstation, and I knew I could walk it in a day.

There were two ways we thought we might get across the deep channel—without the truck certainly; but that didn't matter. We could always come back and salvage it afterwards—if we were still alive.

One way. There was a small clump of mulga trees near the river—mulga and leopard gums; and we could make a rough raft from those. But there was a second, an easier way. Arthur remembered that the truck had four tyres on it, and there were two spares. The six tubes, lashed together, would make a fine raft. We jacked up one wheel after another, and took the tyres off.

RUTH was still pretty sick, but she had all the courage of the daughter of a desert bushman, and was still on her feet. She wandered away a little from the truck while we were working, and a few minutes later we were both startled to hear her call out, suddenly, with what sounded like terror in her voice, but which, when we got to her, we found was urgency and excitement. She was near collapse with crying, and, strangely enough, laughing hysterically at the same time.

She was pointing to where the downpour of the last days had eaten away the cliff of ironstone, or rather eaten underneath it, so that a big portion of it had collapsed where there had been a fault—a fault which had split the mass of ironstone in some prehistoric age, at

CYCLING BECAUSE I LIKE IT

the same time as the gold-bearing rock, which was of a later era, had flowed in a molten state across the desert.

The fault in the ironstone was filled with that gold-bearing rock, and the rain had brought it to light again. We could see the gold shining in it, nuggets which were bigger than any either Arthur or myself had seen. The rain had washed them clean where they showed and they were the same colour as the sunset which had heralded the storm which had led us to them.

We pegged the claim—three claims. Then we went back and crossed the river on the raft of tyres. I left Arthur with Ruth and walked to Randall Stafford's station. He

sent back food and dry clothes on camels—it was still too wet to send a truck. But the camels took us back to the station, and from there it was simple enough.

And if you look closely enough on the map of that part of Australia to-day, you can see the Blind Sam gold-mine mapped—and a long way away from the desert, the Blind Sam cattle-station.

Ruth and her three children came up and stayed with me the last holiday they had from college. The youngest of them is just learning to ride a horse.

But I've never been back to the desert, nor has Ruth or Arthur—and none of us wants to go back, now.

Cycling Because I Like It

RONALD ENGLISH

A SCHOOLGIRL sitting on a high stone wall asked Mr Polly: 'Why are you riding about the country on a bicycle?'

H. G. Wells, when writing *The History of Mr Polly*, did not tell us which word the girl emphasised, so that we do not know whether she was mainly interested in Mr Polly or his bicycle. She may have stressed the word 'Why', 'you', or 'bicycle'. The variation of the emphasis alters the meaning. But Mr Polly's reply was not ambiguous. He said: 'I'm doing it because I like it.'

The schoolgirl, so we are told, then sought to estimate the social status of Mr Polly, no doubt looking from Mr Polly to the bicycle, and from the bicycle to Mr Polly. Even in those days, forty or fifty years ago, a bicycle was a bit of a guide to a man's social standing. A man with a brand-new bicycle obviously had money to spend. That he wasted it on a bicycle was a sure sign that he did not know how to spend it. So the schoolgirl dangled Mr Polly on her little-finger until her schoolmates

gave the show away. They were behind the wall, and they giggled at a vital moment in Mr Polly's career.

To-day, the bicycle is looked upon as a poor man's chariot, a means of saving petrol or a handy, but laborious, method of shopping or gathering a few wild-flowers for the mantel-piece. Only those who cycle about the country because they like it regard cycling as a pleasant pastime. Unfortunately we have no words in the English language that differentiate between the cyclist who cycles for convenience and the cyclist who rides for pleasure. Considering that there are some twelve million bicycles in use in Britain, it is surprising that we have not added a few substantives to the vocabulary so that we can make ourselves clear when talking about cyclists.

I KNOW that I am often referred to as being 'cycling-mad', which describes me well enough—but is, I feel, a little impolite. I

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suppose that anyone who goes for a bicycle-ride in a storm or in a blizzard must expect non-cyclists to question his sanity. In my madness I've often pushed my bicycle into the face of a snowstorm. I cannot pretend that it always gives me pleasure; but, when I reach my destination, change my clothes, and sit by a warm fire, I feel immensely happy and satisfied.

Cycling-madness does not strike all cyclists in the same way. A short while ago I joined a cycling club on a ford-hunting expedition. The idea was to find as many river fords as possible, and to cross them without dismounting. We found seven fords in an area of ten square miles, and rode through all except one. Luckily, no one got a ducking, and there were only a few wet feet; but, quite honestly, I'd have walked across the footbridges if I had been alone.

Once when I had an attack of cycling-madness I tried to push a tandem over the Sty Head Pass in the Lake District. My wife and I were spending a few days touring. We had pedalled round Windermere and Conistone, struggled up the steep sides of the Wrynose and Hard Knott Passes and crossed into Wasdale.

Pass-storming is an affliction that affects many cyclists touring in hilly country. There are few passes that have not been crossed by cyclists. Usually the cyclists use lightweight machines that can be carried when necessary. I knew that lightweight bicycles had been taken over Sty Head; but a loaded tandem was a different proposition.

We spent the night at a small hotel in Wasdale, and I asked our host what he thought of the idea of taking a tandem over the pass. He looked amused. 'Well,' he said, 'you *could* take a tandem over—but, if you lived here, you wouldn't try—not even if you were paid for it.' Then he added that we could turn back if we couldn't reach the top, which seemed to be a sensible suggestion, as we didn't favour stopping up there permanently.

What a pity it is that failure stories don't appeal to us as much as success stories! It was a landslip that prevented us from taking the tandem over the top. The loose scree had slipped and completely covered the path on the mountainside. At first things went well. We broke a strap that held on our luggage, dragged the tandem six times across a river, and started the ascent. Once the pathway left

the stream, it seemed to be nothing but a ledge, about four feet wide, on which the scree stones had been spread. Without the tandem we could have reached the top in half-an-hour; but the tandem wasn't prepared to be pushed up so rough a track without a struggle. The wheels slipped sideways towards the edge of the path or got jammed between rocks. We lifted it bodily over large boulders, or dragged, pushed, and levered it between rocky projections.

Eventually we had to remove the baggage and carry the bags up separately in a kind of relay operation. I fastened a strap to the frame and over my shoulder so that I could lift the tandem over difficult bits; but this didn't work very well. If I straightened my back, the tandem rose in the air and hit me on the shin with a pedal. If I did not straighten up occasionally, my back became locked as though I had a severe bout of lumbago.

There is a limit to human endurance; but we did not have to wait until we reached that limit. The path suddenly disappeared into a tumbled mass of scree. We left the tandem and climbed to the cairn at the top of the pass. Above us, on our left, the pinnacles of Great Gable thrust their rugged shapes into the sky. Across the valley, between Lingmell Crag and Long Pike, we could see the top of Scafell Pike, and, far below, the silver streak of Lingmell Beck glistened in the sun. Having seen the top of the pass, and convinced ourselves that we could have taken the tandem over and down to Borrowdale but for the landslip, we returned to Wasdale.

I don't know why enthusiastic cyclists are so keen on storming passes. A difficult route is a challenge, of course, just as much as a difficult rock-face is a challenge to a rock-climber. I cannot think of a logical reason for struggling up a pass with a tandem, any more than I can explain why a rock-climber insists on reaching the top by the hardest way. I suppose we do it because we like it.

CYCLISTS do not spend all their time looking for steep hills, rough tracks, and bad weather. These are merely incidentals that add variety to the main business of turning the pedals round. A favourite diversion of many cyclists is to stand on bridges. My preference is for old river bridges with refuges for pedestrians. Let my wheels take me to such bridges as those at Hereford, Aylesford, Ross-

A PLEA FOR THE HORSE-STINGER

on-Wye, or Wansford, and I will stop for a smoke. The pipe is puffed nonchalantly until the tobacco glows, then I lean against the parapet, holding the pipe with both hands, for there is always a feeling that it will drop into the water, and watch the reflections.

Bridges cause another kind of reflection, too. You gaze idly into the water, and soon you are thinking about other bridges on which you've stood and smoked. My mind often goes back to the wooden bridge over the River Hope on the northern coast of Scotland. We were tandem-touring in the north-west and northern Highlands, and the day after crossing Hope Bridge we went to Cape Wrath lighthouse.

To reach Cape Wrath it is necessary to cross the Kyle of Durness, a wide inlet of the sea. We waited on the quay for a while until a small rowing-boat with an outboard motor came into view. A black figure waved to us and pointed along the cliffs. We guessed the meaning of the signal, for there was no water near the quay. A pathway rose and fell along the top of the cliff, and we hauled the tandem to a point above the boat. 'We've got to get down there somehow or other,' I said. And we had, too.

Mr Morrison, the ferryman, stood in his boat, waiting patiently. Obviously he expected us to climb down. Carrying a tandem down a cliff did not mean anything to him; but we couldn't very well turn back, so we found a

crevice and clambered down to the bottom with the tandem bouncing and bumping on the rocks. Then we skidded and stumbled over black, slippery boulders to the boat. Mr Morrison took the tandem from us and laid it across the bow with the wheels hanging over the water. As we crossed the Kyle I had a miserable feeling that, at any moment, the tandem would slip and dive into the water, baggage and all. I hung on to the frame, grimly, while Mr Morrison sat against the tiller, full of confidence, listening to the oyster-catchers, for he was used to taking all manner of cargoes in his little boat across the Kyle of Durness.

The road from the ferry to the lighthouse was not a road, but a pile of broken stones, for workmen were busy making a new surface. Without any doubt we would have reached the lighthouse earlier if we had left the tandem behind. Our return journey over the eleven miles was made on the back of the lighthouse lorry in company with the local minister, the district nurse, a lighthouse engineer, a girl hiker, and two Canadian tourists. No doubt some cyclists would have shunned such a means of transport. It is cheating to take a lift when the bicycle is rideable. However, I have never supported this philosophy, and shall always accept a lift when it is offered and the roads are unfit for cycling. After all, one can ride on the back of a lorry because one likes it, too!

A Plea for the Horse-Stinger

GEORGE E. HYDE, F.R.E.S.

IF we take a walk near a river or a pond on a bright day in the summer we can hardly fail to notice a number of swiftly-flying, brightly-hued insects hawking over the water, or pausing occasionally on the reeds. Our observations of these creatures may stimulate

a deeper curiosity, and make us wonder about their habits and purpose. If a countryman chanced to come along, he might inform us that we were watching horse-stingers, and a little judicious questioning would possibly lead to other revelations on the subject. But it is

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doubtful if our informant would attempt to explain when and why the name of horse-stinger originated. Like many loosely applied titles, this one contains a suggestion of mystery, and no authority has recorded its source. It is sufficient to say that it dates back to an age when students of natural history paid little attention to accuracy.

At the present time the horse-stinger is more generally known as the dragonfly, and several excellent books describe in detail the truly astonishing story of its development. They also inform us that no dragonfly has a sting, or is capable of inflicting injury on a horse or a human being. This, perhaps, is a relief, even if slightly disappointing.

But returning to our own observations on the riverbank or pondside we should see that the flashing insects claiming our attention varied considerably in size and marking. It would be wrong to assume that the smaller ones were the offspring of the larger, and correct to realise that they were of different species. There could be as many as half-a-dozen kinds of dragonflies in view at once. This does not mean, however, that they are as numerous and varied as some other insects, for in the whole of Britain there are only about forty species. Even this modest total includes a number that are rare and local in distribution.

BUTTERFLIES and moths, beetles and sundry flies are in far greater legion than dragonflies, and one reason for this outnumbering is that dragonflies, unlike the majority of insects, are dependent on water for their existence. Their early life is spent entirely in the depths of a pond or stream, and they only leave the watery element on reaching maturity. It is true that they frequently wander considerable distances from their birthplace, but the females, at least, must always return to perform their task of laying eggs.

The dragonfly larva, or nymph as it is often called, is wingless, and has none of the brilliancy of its parent. It lurks in the mud and amongst aquatic plants, and preys on its neighbours. Scorning a vegetable diet, it lives entirely on the small creatures sharing its home. It may even attack, and consume, its own blood-relations if no other prey is to hand. The period of this underwater life varies in the different kinds of dragonflies, and

it may last for as long as two years. When it has eaten its fill, the nymph leaves the water by ascending a reed or plant-stem, and awaits the revolutionary change into a winged insect. There is no pupal stage, or resting-period, like that of the caterpillar-butterfly life cycle. At the critical moment of this transformation the tough skin of the awaiting nymph splits on the back, and the dragonfly struggles out. It gasps for breath as it clutches its perch with hooked feet, and finally settles down for its wings to unfold. In an hour or so it may attempt a first weak flight, but it requires several days to acquire full flying ability. During this period its colours become brighter.

If different kinds of dragonflies are watched at rest, it will be seen that some hold their wings rigid and flat, and that others close them together like the wings of a resting butterfly. All the larger dragonflies rest with the wings flat, and they are commonly called hawkers. Their rather smaller relatives, the so-called darters, have similar habits, and all belong to a division of dragonflies called Anisoptera. The dragonflies that rest with their wings pressed together are known as damsel-flies, and are members of the division Zygoptera.

IT is natural to wonder how long dragonflies live, and many people are surprised to learn that their winged state rarely lasts for more than a few weeks. Their fortune in this respect is considerably influenced by the state of the weather, for during dull spells they remain motionless and take no food. In bright weather they hunt for flies, and they consume vast numbers of these. A few butterflies and moths are able to live through our winter in hibernation, but no dragonfly has this advantage. Some of the larger autumn kinds can be seen on the wing until November, but the cold finally kills them.

The status of certain dragonflies classed as British is greatly influenced by migration. One or two kinds found regularly in southern England are visitors from overseas, and although they sometimes breed here, and even establish colonies, it is doubtful if they would survive unless their ranks were swelled by fresh arrivals from abroad. The handsome blue-and-black scarce *Aeschna* dragonfly can usually be seen in reasonable numbers during the late summer, but a large proportion of those observed are males. Rather curiously,

A PLEA FOR THE HORSE-STINGER

I met with a solitary female of this rare dragonfly a year or two ago. She was hawking in typical fashion over a heath in North Lincolnshire, and I had a good view of her graceful flight and distinctive markings. Apart from this one occasion, I have searched in vain for the members of her wandering race.

In this age of speed it is understandable that questions have been asked about the velocity of dragonflies. Many far-fetched references to the subject have been published, amongst them the claim that the fastest dragonflies sometimes travel at 80 miles an hour. This is an absurd exaggeration, and it is doubtful if any British dragonfly often exceeds a third of that speed. Some of these insects inhabiting tropical countries are more agile, however, and one at least is officially said to fly at a mile a minute over short distances. In estimating the speed of dragonflies, and other flying insects, it should be remembered that small objects always appear to travel faster than large ones.

The subject of the maximum size of dragonflies is another point of interest which is liable to distortion. The largest of our native species, the emperor dragonfly, measures a little more than 4 inches across the wings, and has a body of about 3 inches in length. It looks larger when flying, and this perhaps explains why we hear reports of monsters with a wing-span of 8 or 9 inches. Before man appeared on the earth, or, to be more exact, during the later carboniferous age, there were giant dragonflies with wings of over 2 feet from tip to tip, and their fossil remains have been found in several European countries.

The mating habits of dragonflies differ from those of all other insects, and have aroused considerable discussion. In some species the male grasps the female by the neck, and carries

her in tandem flight. He may also accompany her when the eggs are laid. These are either scattered loosely in the water, or carefully inserted into the leaves and other parts of water-plants. The method varies in the different species, and the eggs also differ considerably in shape and size.

APART from the weather, dragonflies have a few natural enemies, and the greatest menace to their well-being is the destruction of their haunts. The draining and filling, or the pollution, of ponds naturally destroys the creatures residing there, and these may include numbers of dragonfly nymphs. In a similar way, interference with a stream or river may cause serious havoc. It is not likely that public opinion will be deeply affected by the fate of dragonflies in any stage, but these fascinating creatures are certainly worth a little consideration. They cause no harm to human property, and they add charm to the landscape. Fortunately, the creation of nature reserves in various parts of the country is helping to preserve wild life, including insects. Some of the areas now set aside in this way contain the breeding-haunts of rare and beautiful dragonflies, and it is hoped that encouragement will make it possible for dwindling species to recover in status.

But it is obvious that the majority of places in which dragonflies live will not receive this careful treatment, and many of the insects are doomed to disappear. One of our very rarest dragonflies, the orange-spotted emerald, is now confined to a limited part of Hampshire, and its hold is very precarious. We can only hope that, along with others of equal attraction, it will manage to survive for future generations to study and enjoy.

The Makar

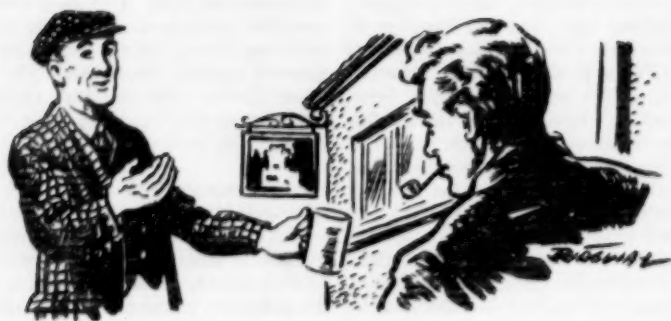
*This weirdless nicht
My thochts are thrang,
Seekan the licht
O' skinklan sang.*

*I speir my hert,
An' it is dumb,
Oot o' the mirk
Nae sang'll come.*

*But in the lift
There leams a staur,
The gowden gift
O' makar's pouer.*

*Syne i' the nicht
Nae sang I lack,
God gie's the licht
Man canna mak.*

E. B. RAMSAY.



An Eye to the Future

ALAN STUART

IT was a delightful evening in early summer, too fresh and warm to waste in the noisy, smoke-laden atmosphere of the saloon bar. I carried my tankard out to one of the rustic tables set in the paved courtyard and sat, with the last of the sunlight warming my hands and face, at peace with the world at large. I am still unable to decide whether it was the working of an adverse fate or whether the meeting with Joey for the first time would have happened, anyway.

A little shrimp of a man sidled in from the pavement, sniffed as he examined me out of the corner of his brown, birdlike eye, and then pecked forward his head. 'Mind if I sit down, guv?' he asked in a husky voice, softly overlaid with pseudo culture. The tone reminded me more of native gin in Calcutta than old port in Kensington, but, before I had time to clear my throat to reply, there he was in a chair on the opposite side of the table. His face was wizened and creased like an anæmic walnut. He sighed heavily. 'Feet killin' me in this weather,' he confided, and ran the tip of his tongue along between thin lips. 'Hot, ain't it?'

I agreed that it was.

The little man sighed again, then unbuttoned a rather loud-check jacket and revealed the eye-searing splendour of a vividly-scarlet

waistcoat with brass buttons. 'Get a bit thirsty, walkin' round the perishin' streets in this weather.' Again the tip of his tongue moistened his lips. 'Like as not, the dust and petrol fumes and things.'

Sharp brown eyes stared innocently into mine and, as my pot was almost empty and it was too warm to offer an effective defence, I rose. 'Very well. Have one on me?' I suggested.

'Oh, well, as you're on your feet, as you might say.' He waved a clawlike hand magnanimously, his prominent Adam's apple leaped, and he allowed himself, with the most delicate tact, to be persuaded. 'Draught bitter for me, if you insist.'

I COLLECTED the drinks and returned to my new-found friend. He was sitting staring at three small boys playing with a ball in the roadway. 'Little perishers'll break a ruddy window,' he remarked reprovingly when his face emerged from the beer. 'There! What did I tell you?' But he was wrong; the ball bounced harmlessly off the glass. 'Careless, that's what they are. All the same nowadays. Thoughtless.'

He glowered angrily as play was resumed. 'Now, when I was a nipper I had an eye on the

AN EYE TO THE FUTURE

future. "Be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon 'em.'" He half-rose from his seat to declaim, his right hand pressed against his chest. "I wasn't afraid of it, I wasn't born with it neither, and nobody was likely to thrust it on me, but I had the will, guv, the will to greatness."

He fell back limply and took another pull at the beer before fumbling through his pockets for a cigarette. Fortunately I smoke a pipe. He took the rebuff philosophically.

"Where nippers go wrong is not applying themselves soon enough," he went on. "Now, take me again, for instance. I knew what I wanted right from the start. Nothin' wet like an engine-driver or a fireman. Not me! I made up my mind right away and stuck to it. That's how to succeed."

He had unearthed a moth-eaten butt from his violently-coloured waistcoat. I supplied a match.

"Yes, guv, from the very start I wanted to be a big-time crook. I saw it would pay." He sighed and ignored my raised eyebrows. "I wanted a career where initiative and brains, and not too much work, would carry me to the top—sufficient money without waitin' until sixty-five. I can tell you, I put down my success entirely to plannin' when I was a kid." The spate of words died and he lay back, glaring at me, challengingly.

"Ah, then you were a success in your chosen profession?" I asked, trying hard to mask my misbelief.

The wizened features assumed an air, half dignity, half injury. "Success? I should think so! There isn't a man in the business has a better record than me," he growled huskily, finishing the remains of the drink in a gulp. "You've never heard of Little Joey?"

I admitted it was so.

"There you are, you see. What's that if it isn't success? Never once in the hands of the coppers, never once mentioned in the papers. I call that success for a twenty-year stretch of crime."

Of course it was, when you think of it: only the unfortunate failures end up in jug and have their life-stories in the Sunday papers.

"Here, I'll tell you what." He leaned over, confidentially, after allowing the wisdom of his last statement to sink in. "Be a good chap and stand 'em up again. I'd do it myself like a shot, but my feet are killin' me. When you come back I'll tell you how it all started."

THE sun had gone down, eyes of light flicked on in the windows opposite, but it was still warm enough when I returned from my mission of mercy.

Joey thanked me. There was a mellow look about the brown eyes now, the almost smug look of a man who has found a sucker.

"All right then. How about the story of your misspent youth," I prodded at him maliciously. I was determined he would sing for his supper.

"Yes, yes, to be sure. Though, mind you, in strictest confidence, only because I've taken a great fancy to you," he replied, sipping his beer at a more leisurely rate, probably sensing that it was his last. "Well now, as I was sayin' before you pushed off, I made up my mind when I was so high, and there was plenty of practice at the school the folks sent me to." He grinned and wiped the back of his hand across his lips.

"I was the scraggiest, smallest shaver there and life wouldn't have been worth a damn if I hadn't sorted things out from the start." He tapped his forehead significantly. "When you're small you've got to have it here, see?"

"First day one of the biggest thugs gave me a tannin'. Next day another was at it, but I made up my mind, quick. Same night I pinched a couple of tanners and paid them over to Jerry Fiddes and Bill O'Donnell the very next day. They acted bodyguard from then on for sixpence a week each. That took care of that." He grinned and asked me again for a cigarette. I motioned with my pipe to remind him, and he shrugged his shoulders before producing a fresh twenty from his pocket. He borrowed a match. My respect for his methods went up another notch.

"Must have come a trifle expensive, even if you did pinch the cash," I suggested.

He swallowed smoke the wrong way laughing at the suggestion. "Are you kiddin'?" he managed to gasp at last, wiping tears from their lurking-places among the wrinkles. "Don't be daft, guv. I never paid them. They paid themselves!"

I scratched my head. "I don't quite get it. You just said you did."

Light from the saloon bar revealed the scorn on his features. "I made them work for it. That's why I say it was the beginnin' of my career, and in a way it began theirs too. It was like this. I rustled round a dozen of the other dwarfs and explained, nicely mind you, what was goin' to happen to them if they

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didn't cough up twopence every Monday morning. Run out a clean bob profit each week after Bill and Jerry had worked on the little squirts once or twice. I tell you, you've got to use your loaf if you're a half-pint.' He remained silent, sipping his drink primly, as though butter wouldn't melt in his mouth.

'It's a wonder your two bullies didn't think of that one themselves,' I said at last.

'That's what I'm tryin' to tell you, guv. That's kids all over. They never think. That pair were too busy actin' what they wanted to be in after life. They couldn't even play cops and robbers, because they both wanted to be cops.' He flicked the stub of the cigarette in a graceful arc into the roadway, narrowly missing a large form which was coming round the corner.

'Now then, watch where you're throwing your ends,' a voice, heavy with authority, barked.

As the massive form lumbered into the light Little Joey laughed. 'Well, well! If it isn't Sergeant O'Donnell, as I live and breathe.' He lay back surveying the policeman with birdlike sharpness.

'Oh, it's you, is it?' The sergeant's glance travelled slowly to me and then back to my friend. 'On the scrounge as usual, I see.'

'I resent that, copper. Resent it keenly. This gentleman may have paid for my refresh-

ment, but not at my suggestion.' He puffed out his chest indignantly and looked to me for confirmation.

I shrugged.

'Your friend Sergeant Fiddes is inside. I suggest you join him and quit insultin' your betters.'

The sergeant laughed and turned away. 'You always had a gift of the gab, Joey, I'll grant you that.' The swing-door closed behind his bulk and Little Joey arranged his ruffled feathers.

I looked at him curiously. He was finishing the remains of his beer and glowering at the door. 'You mean to tell me that was one of—'

He rose to his feet and held up a scrawny hand for silence. 'Bill O'Donnell, as ever was. Still without brains,' he interrupted. 'You see where lack of application in youth got them? Sergeants!' He managed to inject such infinite scorn into the word that the policemen actually appeared less than the dust on his shoes. 'They started out with copper's minds, and see where they've landed,' he said angrily. 'Fifty years of age and only sergeants. They ought to be ashamed!' As an afterthought he said: 'No, no. Thank you all the same, but I won't have another drink after aspersions cast.' He hesitated for a minute and, when I made no comment, shuffled off into the street.

His feet were still killing him.

The Haunted Racecourse

(Achilles' horses, Xanthus and Balius, were the twin foals of the Harpy Podarge by Zephyrus)

*Where did the horses of Achilles go
That were immortal? On the Trojan plain
Scamander still runs golden with the stain
Of melting Ida; but that gentle flow
Quenches no velvet lips, nor cools the glow
Of fiery nostrils. There no careless mane
Is dabbled black, and shaken grey again,
The twin foals graze where sweeter grasses grow.
And yet, where hoofs are printed on the green,
When the turf thunders, and the grandstands roar,
The sons of swift Podarge hover near,
Free, free as air, intangible, unseen,
And would give all their liberty to hear
The voice of their own master speak once more.*

DAPHNE MORLEY-FLETCHER.

Lumber-Room Explorers

The National Register of Archives

ARTHUR TURNER

ALL over the United Kingdom groups of explorers are to-day probing into British history, unearthing fresh evidence about life and events in past centuries and amassing information of great value to historians, antiquarians, and others concerned with our national story. The quest is being conducted among the dusty documents which have in many instances lain untouched for decades in lumber-rooms and store-places of private houses and business premises.

Oddly, though we in Britain probably have a greater wealth of archives than any other country—more even than Italy—until comparatively recently few steps had been taken for their proper preservation. The Public Record Office is only concerned with archives of the courts of law and Government departments, and no regular plan existed for the keeping of local government and private or semi-private papers, every local authority, every corporation, and every parish being allowed to decide for itself just which archives merited preservation and how they should be kept.

In addition to their normal accumulation of personal and business correspondence, which itself may acquire historic importance with the passage of years, private individuals in the past not infrequently acquired official or semi-official documents. Thus, military leaders retained Army orders relating to famous battles, and these interesting records soon found their way into family archives. As a result, many have become lost; others have undoubtedly been destroyed; and the threat of destruction hangs over those which do exist.

Many examples of striking discoveries of historic records in unexpected places could be quoted. About 1200 old deeds rescued

from a solicitor's waste in Surrey not so long ago were found to include several fine documents, such as a grant of James I disposing of former monastic lands in many counties. Of these 1200 deeds, only one in fact related to Surrey, the others concerning estates all over England. Again, no less than three lorryloads of archives were found in a pigsty near Doncaster, where they had been dumped on removal from business premises. Among them were not only old wills and manorial court rolls—some nearly 350 years old—but also royal grants and old maps and plans.

It is hardly surprising that agitation has now resulted in steps being taken to meet the risks which threaten such accumulations in general, or that plans have been made to co-ordinate the archives and enable them to serve a useful purpose. It has at last been realised that they are a national heritage, meriting a nation-wide scheme of this sort.

ALTHOUGH as far back as 1869 the Government set up the Historical Manuscripts Commission to inquire into the location and extent of manuscripts belonging to institutions and individuals, the limited resources of that body have been mainly directed to publishing detailed reports on a comparatively small number of accumulations.

The next big step towards ensuring better custody for our archives took place in 1932, when the British Records Association was founded. It was established to co-ordinate the work of societies and individuals interested in the matter, and also to encourage owners and custodians of historic papers to protect them.

Then, in 1940, a provisional list of archives was prepared jointly by the Commission and

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the Association, as a wartime precaution against the possibility of unrecorded documents being destroyed. The list, however, had naturally to be drawn up in haste, and was incomplete.

In 1945 a more comprehensive scheme was therefore authorised. The Treasury sanctioned funds for the compilation of what is now termed the National Register of Archives, the task to be undertaken by the Historical Manuscripts Commission with a specially appointed staff.

The Register takes the form of a card-index housed at the Public Record Office, in Chancery Lane, London. In addition to the full-time staff, committees of honorary helpers have been enlisted in most counties to report the existence of historical papers in local private or semi-private possession, and owners and custodians of such manuscripts have been earnestly invited to allow the local helpers to examine these archives.

The explorations are thus being conducted by historians, antiquarians, clergymen, doctors, librarians, and others who have the needed qualifications and enthusiasm. Lancashire and Cheshire were the first counties to appoint local committees, and one absorbing discovery was the accounts of a Liverpool slave-trading firm for the years 1740-1780.

Examples of many other interesting finds could be quoted. Every dip into history's lucky-bag does not produce a prize, of course, but there is always a chance of stumbling upon something of great historic worth. Historically important papers have been found among old tradesmen's bills or filed with a mass of unimportant business letters.

A Buckinghamshire estate owner reported that he had a collection of old papers stored in wooden boxes in a workshop and would be glad to have these examined before they were destroyed—his workmen were complaining that the boxes were in their way. When the accumulation was sifted and listed, it was found to include a large quantity of important material about activities and persons of bygone times. In Warwickshire another private collection of old papers yielded a detailed survey of royal castles, manors, and forests in England in the year 1609. This survey was written on 49 parchment sheets, each bearing the royal signature. It was apparently a draft prepared for royal approval before the official document, now lost, was drawn up.

WHEN the National Register of Archives was begun in 1945, it had a full-time staff of two and the work was expected to be completed in two and a half years. The wealth of private archives has since entailed increasing the staff to ten. Originally the co-operation of voluntary helpers up and down the country was not envisaged. It was expected that the necessary reports could be collected by postal contact with the owners or custodians of archives. Yet an elaborate system of local assistance has had to be promoted.

The Register is of much more than academic value—though it is not, as sometimes supposed, a Government probe of private papers for some ulterior reason. The job has more in common with that of the Historical Monuments Commission and, so far as the preservation of historic relics is concerned, the National Trust than with that of an ordinary Government department. It is not run by prying bureaucrats, and the Register is being built up to help research workers and students who wish to consult manuscript sources, and who want to know what documents exist and where they are to be found.

Owners sometimes benefit directly, too. Not only do they have the satisfaction of knowing that their co-operation is helping research, but in many instances where the owner has difficulty in housing his archives arrangements are made for these to be deposited on long loan in local record offices, public libraries, and similar centres, where better facilities are available.

THE uses of the Register are wide. The archives listed may enable the chemist to ascertain the extent of existing notes on research in his own line by pioneers a century and a half ago, or may satisfy the economist that he has not overlooked some evidence bearing on his inquiries into the effect of food prices on national health in the 17th century. Or the Register may make it possible for gaps in old churchwardens' accounts to be filled in, by bringing the missing sheets to light in some unexpected place, thereby helping an incumbent who is preparing a history of his church.

One of the most striking features of the Register is the frequency with which papers relating to one locality are found in an entirely different area. Only by means of a master index can they usually be traced and

LUMBER-ROOM EXPLORERS

a big handicap removed from the path of those undertaking research.

Scotland has its own Register, begun in 1946. Though this is being built up by appeals direct to private owners, and without the help of local committees, the small band of experts has already examined and recorded a vast number of archives from mediæval to comparatively modern times. Discoveries meriting special mention are the original papers relating to the preservation of the Scottish regalia during the siege of Dunnottar Castle in 1651-1652, hitherto unknown letters of Samuel Pepys, and correspondence and plans by Robert and James Adam.

As in the case of its English and Welsh counterpart, the Scottish National Register of Archives takes the form of a card-index arranged topographically, and it is already being found helpful by historians, economists, and others seeking information about Scottish

conditions and activities in the days gone by.

Sir James Fergusson, Keeper of the Records of Scotland, has declared that the history of Scotland is yet largely unwritten. More than forty years have elapsed since the last full-length history of the country was published, and not only is it now out-of-date, but it has several gaps in detail as well. The search now being carried out in connection with the preparation of a master index of archives will facilitate the preparation of a more complete history.

In England the gaps in history books are smaller, and new editions have been published more recently. Yet even there a vast treasury of additional material undoubtedly awaits discovery in archives which have not been sifted for decades. The Register will tap these sources and, with the co-operation of the owners or custodians, brush the cobwebs from such hidden history.

Mara

*Oft had I thought of tears,
And still my eyes were dry,
The hart desired the waterbrooks
Less than I.*

*I thought of a salt sea-wave,
With a rainbow in its crest,
Dashing its brightness over me,
Setting the beauty in me free,
Drowning the rest.*

*I thought of clear warm rain,
And welling, limpid springs,
Streams that should sweep from every vein
Encroaching darkness out again,
And water other things.*

*I found there was a tear
Sweeter than these could be,
Oh, sweeter far than raindrop rare
Or cold, salt sea.
It stole into my heart,
Further than eye could see,
And honey-sweetness there distilled,
Till the whole sorry place was filled,
Sweet, sweet like sacramental wine,
The honey-tear, the tear not mine,
That's shed for me.*

ANNE PHILIP SMITH.

Twice-Told Tales

LXVI.—Pot-Luck

[From *Chambers's Journal* of June 1856]

POT-LUCK, or the *fortune de pot*, is on the whole the most curious feeding spectacle in Europe. There are more than a dozen shops in Paris where this mode of procuring a dinner is practised, chiefly in the back-streets abutting on the Pantheon. About two o'clock, a parcel of men in dirty blouses, with sallow faces, and an indescribable mixture of recklessness, jollity, and misery lurking about their eyes and the corners of their mouths, take their seats in a room where there is not the slightest appearance of any preparation for food—nothing but half-a-dozen old deal-tables, with forms beside them, on the side of the room, and one large table in the middle. They pass away the time in vehement gesticulation, and talking in a loud tone. A huge bowl is at last introduced, and placed on the table in the middle of the room. At the same time a set of basins, corresponding to the number of the guests, are placed on the side-tables. A woman with her nose on one side, good eyes, and the thinnest of all possible lips, opening every now and then to disclose the white teeth which garnish an enormous mouth, takes her place before it. She is the presiding deity of the temple; and there is not a man present to whom it would not be the crowning felicity of the moment to obtain a smile. Every cap is doffed with a grim politeness peculiar to that class of humanity, and a series of compliments fly into the face of Madame Michel. Mère Michel, however, says nothing in return, but proceeds to stir with a thick ladle, looking much larger than it really is, the contents of the bowl before her. These contents are an enormous quantity of thick brown liquid, in the midst of which swim numerous islands of vegetable matter and a few pieces of meat. Meanwhile a damsel, hideously ugly—but whose ugliness is in part concealed by a neat trim cap—makes the tour

of the room with a box of tickets, grown black by use, and numbered from one to whatever number may be that of the company. Each of them gives four sous to this Hebe of the place, accompanying the action with an amorous look, which is both the habit and the duty of every Frenchman when he has anything to do with the opposite sex. The tickets distributed, up rises number one—with a joke got ready for the occasion, and a look of earnest anxiety, as if he were going to throw for a kingdom—takes the ladle, plunges it into the bowl, and transfers whatever it brings up to his basin. It is contrary to the rules for any man to hesitate when he has once made his plunge, though he has a perfect right to take his time in a previous survey of the *océan*—a privilege of which he always avails himself. If he brings up one of the pieces of meat, the glisten of his eye and the applauding murmur which goes round the assembly give him a momentary exultation which it is difficult to conceive by those who have not witnessed it. In this the spirit of successful gambling is beyond all doubt the uppermost feeling: it mixes itself up with everything done by that class of society, and is the main reason of the popularity of these places with their *habitués*. The approach to something like a full meal is but the secondary feeling; and yet this ought to count for something too, for in most instances the man is not sure of another morsel till the morrow. The rest try their fortune in turn, according to the numbers they have drawn. It is impossible to see a Frenchman more in his element than under such circumstances. The drollery with which he receives a bad haul of the spoon—though it is a day's starvation to him—and the jocular comments of the rest upon the way in which he has earned his ill-fortune, form altogether tragi-comedy not to be realised anywhere else.



The Churners

GEORGE MOOR

IN the local country weeklies, where half a spacious column can be devoted to one who has not paid his radio licence, you often meet with the more Continental than English custom of advertising for husbands and wives. WIDOWER FARMER SEEKS MATRON USED TO POULTRY AS WIFE, or, as I once saw, UNDER-SIZED YOUNG MAN STUTTERS SEEKS YOUNG LADY AS WIFE. NO REASONABLE OFFER REFUSED.

Such advertisements can sometimes amuse, and in the village inns after an advertisement of this sort has appeared a middle-aged bachelor or cheerful widow is sure to be bantered. But in remote districts the custom has a good deal of practical sense in it. Prospective husbands and wives may meet as ever at church or chapel or some parish meeting, but what happens when a small young man who stutters is living, say, at Blackshaw, and a normal-sized young woman is pining away in Erringden for a small young man who stutters? The twain might never meet were it not for the large-paged local weekly that circulates over the hills and throughout several parishes.

There were other mediums than the local weeklies, however, in the 18th century, when the difficulties were surely increased. Here's how old Rufus Sowden and his son Samson

managed to cope with the problem of finding a wife.

THE Sowdens lived at their own farm of Angars, about as far out of the world as you could be without being exactly in Heaven. The farm stands on Toplady Knoll, that rises like a green island above the mists and smaller hills of the Pennines. There are wooded cloughs on four sides, and a solitary stony track leads to it, dipping down and then climbing upwards. There are no neighbours, and in the middle of the 18th century there were no women at Angars. Old Rufus had lost his wife Jess, and young Samson, though brawny, was on the slow side and had as yet found no one. There was, indeed, no one to find on Toplady Knoll, and the few eligible farmers' daughters whom Samson had approached drew the line at a lifetime on Toplady Knoll, and married elsewhere.

Father and son had to manage farmwork, dairywork, and housework by themselves. One night as they sat by the fireside with their dogs, old Rufus took out his pipe and said meditatively: 'I've been thinking a bit, like. I'm fair stawed with sheep's-heads and black-puddings. One of us must wed.'

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'Aye,' said young Samson. Then, after a bit: 'We might hire a maid, though.'

'Nay, they'll not come where there's no mistress, and a wife's cheaper all round,' said Rufus. 'I thought it had better be you, not me. I've been wedded before, and a bonny young woman would be better for churning and last longer. We're not asking for anything fancy, but she must be a good churner, and I like one with a full jaw of teeth myseln.'

'Aye, it's just finding,' said young Samson despondently.

'Ah,' old Rufus reminded him, 'May Fair's next week.'

ON the day of the fair people came into Kebworthy by trap and on foot from all the surrounding countryside, and tinkers and cheap-jacks had drawn in by the green where the sports were to take place. The inns were full, but outside The Black Bull was the largest crowd. Girls passing by titteringly drew the attention of others to the notice that had been put up by the door, and older women craned forward to get a view of it, while the male wags of the village stood near and made witty comments.

WANTED, ran the notice, A WIFE AT ANGARS FOR SAMSON SOWDEN, THIRTY AND FIT. MUST BE HALE AND A GOOD CHURNER. NEW CLOAK, GOWN, SHOES AND STOCKINGS A YEAR. INQUIRERS MEET MR SOWDEN THE BLACK BULL 7 THIS EVENING.

News of the notice was not slow in spreading about the fair, and you may be sure there were many besides prospective brides who repaired from curiosity to The Black Bull that evening. The Sowdens were certainly bringing customers to the place and the story would be good for business for many a long day after.

Young Samson, spruce, shaven, and in his best velvet claret-coloured waistcoat sat with old Rufus at one end of the unmovably heavy table that had been there since made in the reign of Henry the Eighth, and they interviewed the applicants, for applicants there were—four of them. There was Nell Oxenhope, a tall and skinny leather-brown old dairymaid from Lear Ings; Sarah Bramhall, a brawny widow and non-stop talker; Betty Hardcastle in red flannel, who smoked a little clay-pipe and had a voice as deep as a man's; and Bell Heathside, a tinker's daughter in a dimity gown.

At the sight of the first three applicants for

his hand, young Samson fidgeted and whispered to his father at the back of his hand: 'I think it would be better if thee wed, dad, after all.'

'Nay, it's you they've come for,' said old Rufus hastily, and summoned the landlord. 'Can you fetch a few churns, Joe? We can't say how they'll churn without seeing. We want the best churner.'

THE landlord and young Samson went for the churns, that were then set on the table, and young Samson fetched the milk. As he did so, he took a good gaze at Bell Heathside while she was not looking.

Then the room became hushed. The contestants rolled up their sleeves and tucked in their gowns. Rufus gave the word to start, and there they were at it, the four of them, Bell's black hair slipping down and the muscles of her arms rippling. Young Samson never took his eyes off those arms. Plump brown arms they were. They had seen service before this at a bellows.

Old Rufus leant back, smoking. The firelight from the huge hearth danced in the woodwork of the room and gave a cheerful copper hue to the faces of those watching the four figures in their looped gowns amid the tobacco-haze.

Bell's milk was easily the first to turn, with Nell Oxenhope following. Bell, however, had her butter salted and touched into a neat pat by then, and was ready to go on with more.

But old Rufus intervened. He had spotted those muscles on Bell's arms, and Bell was now declared the winner and mistress-to-be of Angars.

Bell, however, used this moment of triumph to secure better terms. 'You promise a new gown, cloak, stockings and shoes each year,' said she, 'but I must have silver buckles on the first pair of shoes.'

Old Rufus weighed the matter with care. It might be worth the buckles to have an heir for Angars: the others were too old. 'All right,' he agreed, 'silver buckles, but smallish ones.'

AND so Bell Heathside married Samson Sowden and went to Angars. She was tired of a roving life and it suited her well. She wore the silver buckles on Sundays and for weddings and funerals, and the marriage was long and happy. The Sowdens of Angars

call their girls Bell to this day. It just goes to show that advertising pays.

Though there was more to it than that, for once, long after Rufus was dead, when Bell was boasting how she had beaten Nell

Oxenhope at the churning, Samson smiled and revealed that if he was slow he had had his flashes. 'I gave the others the fresh milk,' he said, 'and you the old, so I knew yours would turn the first of all.'

Flash-Back on Diamonds

D. G.

SYMBOLS of wealth and beauty, beyond perhaps any other created object, diamonds have a fascination for everybody. In the course of my career in South Africa, from the 'nineties of last century to the 'forties of this, I came in contact with them a good deal in one way and another; and when I look back on it all my prevailing impression is of the vast toil and trouble involved both in the getting of diamonds and in their guarding when got.

When I first saw Kimberley, in 1897, it had passed its zenith. Gone were the days of the rushing, roaring mining-camp, and in place of the once-busy Diamond Market there remained only rows of empty offices in various stages of decay. The great Kimberley mine, which, when Cecil Rhodes was digging the foundations of his fortune, must have looked like a huge anthill with the top knocked off, seemed now silent and deserted, though it was in actual fact still being worked from a shaft sunk by the side of the old open workings. It is still working, a Mecca for tourists, the world's biggest man-made hole. Kimberley itself, too, remained the capital of the diamond industry, though the local market had faded out in face of concentration at the head offices of the de Beers Company. I never passed without stopping to watch the sorters at work on little heaps of uncut diamonds at their white-paper-covered tables in the windows. In point of fact, but for the discovery of diamonds at

Dutoitspan, Kimberley itself would probably never have existed—and the world could have spared it. The summer heat, the bitter winds of winter, the debris heaps, the surrounding floors (tracts of veld spread over with the excavated rock) made it a desolate and forbidding spot.

At the time de Beers did not control all diamond production in South Africa—nor, I believe, do they now—but, if they could not or did not aspire to do so, they naturally enough kept a very jealous watch on rivals. Apart from other obvious advantages of monopoly, or at least predominance, it would plainly affect their interests also, quite materially, if the total production and sale of diamonds increased.

Losses of diamonds from theft have always been heavy, and are unlikely ever to disappear, despite the most elaborate precautions. In the early days, when hundreds of individual claim-holders worked in the Kimberley mine, the licensed digger sold his stones to established brokers. But, prior to the introduction of a law to regulate possession of and dealing in diamonds, the fields were a happy hunting-ground for the speculators who swarm like flies round every mining-camp. With handbags of cash and sets of jeweller's scales, they tramped the claims, buying from anyone, black or white, who had stones to sell. When the traffic reached a degree of abuse inviting special measures of prevention, the Cape Government passed a law, with severe

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penalties, to stop illicit diamond-dealing, in respect, that is, of rough and uncut stones. A special branch of the Cape Police, the Diamond Detective Department, or D.D.D. for short, was set up in Kimberley.

Most of the stealing was done by 'boys', African labourers, who had opportunities for picking up stones during their work; but the law, recognising them as no more than pawns in the game, punished them for possession much less than it did the dealers for illicit dealing. And de Beers, to encourage some degree of honesty, rewarded any employee handing in a stone, whether found in the course of his work or not. They have often paid rewards for diamonds picked up even in the streets of Kimberley itself—literally on the roads, constructed often of mine debris—though these diamonds were legally Company's property. In and around mine-workings or floors, of course, anybody whose work took him there might pick a diamond up. Underground, the white miners would search the face with candles for the glitter of a half-exposed stone; and African labourers were very quick at all this, a smart boy picking up a 'klippie', as they called them, with his toes and transferring it to his mouth, literally, in a flash.

Most effective of all measures against theft was the compound system. Every boy had to engage to work for a fixed period and during it to live interned in a compound. From it they went to their work and to it they returned. All entrances and exits were guarded. Outside of it, on surface work of various kinds, they had opportunities to desert; but only a few did, and those only in order to make a getaway with stolen diamonds. The boys were well enough content with the conditions—you could see that as soon as you walked into a compound. Between the mine—the term includes compound, floors, and works—and their distant kraals there was nothing to attract them, but only the terrors of urbanised civilisation. They fed well, were tended when sick, spent money in the store, and when discharge-time came they had gathered to themselves much substance.

Desertion meant forfeiting all this, plus any accumulated wages. Those who did desert were of the more sophisticated kind, and, apart from such exceptions, a boy spent his whole time in the mine. Much of it, of course, he passed in the compound, consisting of labourers' quarters, hospital, church, general

store, baths, administrative offices, quarters for the European guards, all built round a square. For the rest, the boy would be mostly, under white gangers, out on the floors, tipping and reloading the trucks which brought out the blue ground, looking like broken blue-grey rock, to be disintegrated under exposure and water-spraying and passed through the pulsator, an ingenious machine for separating out the diamonds. High fences of barbed-wire surrounded the floors, searchlights swept the whole area at night, guards patrolled inside, but, despite all, a boy occasionally got away here, though never from the compound, or on his way from the compound to the floor.

I HAVE heard it said that no man could remain sane after twelve months as guard in the mines. Well, I put in a year myself and am still at large well over half-a-century later. There are better jobs, I agree. The pay was ten shillings a twelve-hour shift, and mostly night duty at that. Yet there was never any lack of men. South Africa was full of folk looking for careers and snapping up any old job meanwhile—ex-officers, hunters, traders, disbanded police, all sorts of people having to get jobs or starve. Mixed lot as they were, I never heard of one being accused of illicit diamond-buying (I.D.B.). Duties were, mainly, running the compounds, controlling labour going to or from work, examining passes, guarding the pulsator and other important spots, and patrolling the floors. This last was the worst—long hours of monotony, with meerkats, spring-hares, and ant-bears for our only company. It was not easy to keep awake twelve hours on end, night after night, for weeks at a stretch. The head guard on his rounds would sometimes only blow his whistle from a distance, and you had to sing out 'All correct' pretty smartly if you were not to be had up for being asleep and fined £2 for a first offence, sacked for a second. No uniform, no badge, and, officially, no arms, though in fact many of us found it not a bad idea to carry revolvers.

Boys waiting for a chance of getting away with stolen diamonds often had well-wishers outside ready to lend a hand. I had a curious experience at Wesselson mine, which at that time was open workings. A diamond-mine, like an emerald-mine, but unlike gold, starts with an open hole in the ground, and when it

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becomes too deep for convenience a shaft is dug. All around lay debris heaps, overgrown with scrub and thorn and honeycombed with holes and caves, making ideal hiding-places. There was one spot in particular, where a disused incline-shaft ran out to these heaps, that required a specially close watch. Guards had been stoned there by invisible hands and were refusing duty. As an experiment, two of us agreed to take on together. The volleys of stones, not big but coming fast and furious, began at once. We propped up two sheets of corrugated-iron and sat behind them, safe enough, but not enjoying the bang and clatter on our improvised shields—and not much use like that as guards. Taking to moving round in turn, we still failed to detect where the artillery was coming from. It was a safe guess that a boy was trying to get away with some stones, and next morning, out very early on some special errand, I met him. He was making away, in a place where he had no business to be at all, and I confronted him suddenly as he was coming round a debris heap, barefooted, ready to run for it. He nearly knifed me as I grabbed at him, but, to cut an interesting struggle short, I eventually bowled him over and sat on him. 'Boss, I give you the klippies, let me go.' A trolley coming along picked us up. Discharged a week before, via the Detention House, he had his diamonds in an empty milk-tin, which he had thrown over the wall, and which he had returned now to collect. He collected also three years' hard labour, and I a cheque for £40 from the Company—not a tip, but percentage on the diamonds.

THE Detention House, salient feature of the precautions against theft, was mainly for the benefit of those boys who wanted to take a present home to their chiefs. Some of the bigger chiefs, it was said, had billycanfuls of choice stones, got mainly in the early days, for by about 1898 de Beers's security arrangements had become too good, and not many a boy clocked in home with a diamond. Every week boys due for discharge gathered at the door of the Detention House. For another week they would be the Company's guests—no work, good food, free smokes.

The building was in three sections. Stripping naked in the first, the reception-room, the boy took his clothing and other possessions into the second, the kit-store. Here he stood

at a counter while guards searched his things. They were very thoroughly searched indeed; diamonds do not take up much room. Boots, fancy pipes, anything, might be broken up; if they were, they would be replaced by the Company. Then the things were put in a sealed bag with a brass tab, numbered. Diamonds were seldom found in this search; but there remained the possibility that a boy might have swallowed a diamond, and this was provided for otherwise.

Before entering the third section, the Detention Hall, the boy was given two blankets and a pair of stiff leather mitts, secured at the wrist by a light chain and lock. A loop on the back of the mitts held a spoon, and a tab on each pair showed the same number as that on the kit. The boy entered, with mitts and blankets, and took his place, naked, in a line against the wall, hands extended above his head. A guard ran his fingers through the boy's woolly hair, examined his ears, nostrils, mouth—mouth particularly. Front and back view, every possible lurking place for a diamond was investigated. Then the mitts were put on and the chain locked round the wrist. This performance was repeated daily while the boy was in detention, and the mitts were never removed except during the search, experience having shown that boys should not have the free use of their fingers while in detention. If a boy wanted to smoke—and they all did—he asked for 'Gwi', and the guard popped a filled pipe into his mouth and held a match for him.

The hall, lofty and large enough to hold perhaps fifty at a time, had three parts roofed over and the remainder enclosed by wire-netting. There were arrangements for examining all excreta, and many diamonds were discovered in this way. No boy was discharged until it was considered practically certain that no stone could be retained in his body. Diet was rich and liberal, but not in any way dosed. If diamonds were discovered in the Detention House no punishment followed. I never heard of any complaint about the ordeal. After all, it was part of the contract.

ANOTHER item in security measures was the Diamond Detective Department, consisting of specially selected and trained men, now a branch of the South African Police.

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Only debris-washers and licensed-dealers could be legally in possession of rough and uncut diamonds; and they had to make returns to Government. To the licensed dealers trading in diamonds all honest people took their stones. An African could not legally possess unless he was a claim-holder, but in that case he would have to sell to a licensed dealer. The operative words are 'rough and uncut diamonds.' Anyone could deal in cut stones.

It was no easy matter to detect an illicit diamond buyer on the job. His procedure was to have his runner get in touch with a boy who had a stone to sell, and arrange a meeting—once he was sure the meeting was not a police trap. The meeting might be on the open veld, or even in the street. The boy would produce his pass, or any piece of paper, so as to look like a job-seeker. He might part with the stone at once, or, with less faith in human nature, display it on his tongue. Some, old hands at the game, and knowing something about quality and value—a matter of quality plus weight—would insist on a stone being weighed. This, involving scales and maybe prolonged haggling, would usually take place somewhere indoors.

Detection, as I have said, was extremely difficult. Hence the introduction of the trapping system. It was not popular; nor were the I.D.B. detectives. The general public saw in them, and their agents the traps, our old friend the *agent provocateur*. Nor would a South African jury, in those days, convict in a case with that provenance, however strong the evidence. Yet every care was taken to protect the innocent. No person might be approached by a trap unless reasonably suspected, from the sworn information of reputable people, or convincing police observation. Then, and only then, could a test follow, and an attempt by a trap to sell a stone to the suspect. If the trap succeeded, it was still not enough; there had to be a second success before arrest. Nor could any trap fake a test. He was searched and emptied of cash before he set out with an identifiable diamond, and his progress out and home was closely watched. The procedure was the same as in the test, except that the actual deal must be seen by concealed detectives, who would then seize and search both trap and buyer. Any money found on the trap would be evidence, and so would the diamond—if recovered, for old

illicit diamond-buyers were amazingly smart at getting rid of it, even in the very act. But all these and other measures safeguarding the innocent were not generally known; and no reference to tests could be made in cases hinging upon a successful trapping.

AMONG other devices for getting rich quick off diamonds is that of discovering a new mine. What more obvious source of wealth? Inevitably therefore the Stock Market at Kimberley was all agog when the report came of a new discovery near Hopetown on the Orange River. Two debris-washers—not prospectors—were claiming discovery rights, and others had pegged claims around, when de Beers challenged the *bona fides* of it. There were two ways, I might explain, by which the public could acquire shares in a discovery. There was the method of the rush, by which all formed up in line and at a given signal raced forward to drive in pegs as close as possible to the actual site of the find. In the present case the property was not rushed, and the other method was adopted. Under this, people formed up at the magistrate's office, and each for half-a-crown got a certificate entitling him to a claim if and when the property was proclaimed. In charge of an escort of police troopers I proceeded to Hopetown with the Commission which Government appointed.

Hopetown, with a normal population of about a hundred whites, had become overnight the stamping-ground of a couple of thousand half-crowners, or claim-owners. They did not turn out with music and garlands to welcome us. If the Commission proved the ground not diamondiferous there would be no more use for their rose-tinted spectacles. It was true the country in general looked very much like that at Wessleton and other diamond areas. But an investor should ask for more than that; he should require proof of the finding of diamonds. In this case the proof had been provided by an inspector of the Mines Department who, as events were to show, had blundered. Prospectors have, indeed, found diamonds in areas as far apart as Tanganyika and the south-west Cape, but rarely has the prospector himself reaped a fortune. Seldom possessed of means to develop a discovery, always convinced his bonanza will be found just the other side of the far-off purple ranges, he parts with his

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hard-won rights for a song, packs his blankets, tools, and a few pots and pans on the back of his donkey, picks up his stick—usually his only weapon—and treks. I have always had a soft spot in my heart for those lone hounds, incorrigible optimists if you like, but mostly honest, and notoriously bad business men. Prospecting for minerals and precious stones will continue to give a precarious livelihood to hundreds of men on the African continent for an unforeseeable time to come.

To return to Hopetown. Smith and Brown, let us call them, were debris-washers, not prospectors. That was nothing against them, and they had certainly produced diamonds, seen by a Government inspector to be taken out of their mine. Mines can be salted with introduced stones, but a prominent financier had had enough faith to invest nearly £100,000. Shouldered out of Kimberley by Rhodes, he was anxious to get ahead of him and de Beers. So here we were on the property—several prospecting-holes, the biggest of them the mine itself, surrounded by a couple of strands of wire, a mere boundary demarcation. The half-crowners followed us like a migrating tribe, and pitched camp outside. Along with us inside were representatives of the various interests—Smith and Brown, the financier, de Beers, and the half-crowners. A set number of loads had to be raised and washed. Sailcloth having been spread around the edges, baskets were filled from the mine and thrown up on the cloth, and the residual gravel, after washing, was carefully sorted for diamonds, under vigilant scrutiny from all the representatives. We of the police had a night job only. If the Commission should not be finding diamonds, there were those outside the fence only too willing to oblige. It was not very difficult after dark to crawl under the fence and throw in a handful of small diamonds.

As the days went by with no diamonds tension increased. Few enough for the area

to be covered, our night policing was no sinecure. We kept candle-lanterns burning on the heaps of soil thrown up from the prospecting-holes. One cold night, moving around to keep warm, I fell into one of the holes, a ten-foot drop, and got a nasty jar and a scalp wound, which still marks me. The half-crowners seemed elevated above the need of sleep, what with a copious supply of liquor, and other diversions. The silence of the outer veld was shattered by songs, shouts, and shrieks.

After a whole week we had washed a hundred loads, and still no diamonds, not even a piece of carbon. No wonder; diamonds had never been found in that kind of rotten basaltic rock. One fine Sunday morning near the end of our time the three members of the Commission were talking near the washing-machine, an affair of a shallow iron pan in which a rake-like arrangement churns up the dirt while water flushes through. If there are any diamonds, there they will be, in the residual deposit of gravel. The plates of the pan tend to work loose and leave small gaps between. One of the three, disregarding advice not to, ran a penknife blade along the plainest crack, washed the sediment in a tub of water, and—there was a diamond! A small one, certainly, but a diamond. We washed another hundred loads, and got nothing. Could there be any doubt of that diamond having been put there before we began?

We packed up and returned to Kimberley. Smith and Brown, charged with fraud, were acquitted on the strength of the diamond found in the pan, the Court holding it was not its province to say how many diamonds had got to be found before the accused were entitled to sell claims. But the Hopetown discovery was, literally, a washout. The diggings were deproclaimed, the financier lost his thousands, and the half-crowners their half-crowns.

Sagacity

*They say the old are wise.
That may be so.
When old we know how much
We do not know!*

DORIS HERVEY.



The Fulfilling of an Ambition

I. E. K. PETERSON

GHULAM AKBAR KHAN was of the Lohar or mechanic caste and belonged to a turbulent tribe in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan. He with others had been rounded up for murder or the theft of Government rifles. They had been marshalled together, an iron ring secured to the leg of each, then chained four together and marched by the Frontier Police to a convenient prison some distance away.

It was now about midday and the prisoners were allowed to eat any food they had with them and, being halted near a brook that ran beside the road, to drink therefrom.

Most of the prisoners were limping from wounds made either by the rubbing of the iron rings on their legs or by bullets; the wounds oozed blood. Although Ghulam Akbar Khan was similarly marked, he didn't limp. A broad-shouldered young man with a mild appearance and intelligent eyes, he appeared to be prepared to accept his punishment without complaint.

'Shun!' came the word of command. The prisoners lying about were generally dilatory in rising to their feet. Not so Ghulam Akbar Khan. His wound was still bleeding, never-

theless he stood upright, ready to move off.

After the prisoners had been deposited safely in the local lock-up, their cases were filed in the local court. The majority admitted their guilt of theft and raiding and received comparatively light sentences. Ghulam Akbar Khan was charged with raiding and the murder of the sentry on duty. To both he maintained that he was not guilty. Notwithstanding he received a life sentence for murder.

IN the prison dormitory wooden bunks were arranged in lines, with one line over the other. Along the side of the bunks ran a stout iron rod, to which the iron rings secured to the prisoner's legs were shackled. Each large room contained about fifty men.

I walked round these dormitories every night to satisfy myself that all was in order. To-night, after their long march, most of the new prisoners were fast asleep, but when I came to Ghulam Akbar Khan's bunk I noticed that he was wide-awake. 'Try to get some sleep,' I advised as I passed. He did not reply, but continued to gaze at the ceiling with his bright intelligent eyes.

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These men were uneducated. They could not be otherwise, living in a wild, barren country where a mere living was difficult to obtain. I had lived in the East for years and could not only speak the vernacular fluently, but also understood the characteristics of some of the classes fairly well. In the rough life these men had been living any trait that seemed like softness was not tolerated and anybody exhibiting such traits was treated with contempt.

I did not speak again that night to Ghulam Akbar Khan, but noticed that he continued to lie on his back with wide-open eyes, deep in thought. There was something about this strange fellow that appealed.

My difficulty with prisoners in that district was to find them sufficient and suitable work as required by their sentences. In a waterless, barren country agriculture was negligible. On the other hand, the mechanic class pass on details of their trade from father to son for generations. It becomes a sort of second religion. Although Ghulam Akbar Khan was quite a young man, I had no doubt that he already possessed a good knowledge of his trade. Therefore when next the overseer asked for work for prisoners I immediately instructed him to try out Ghulam Akbar Khan in the prison workshops. As a strong guard always watched prisoners at work, there was really no fear of escape.

Some time later I dropped into the workshop to see how things were going. Ghulam Akbar Khan, I observed, was heating and shaping some scrap-iron, an abundance of which had accumulated in the workshop yard from the remains of old abandoned cars and lorries. I inquired what he was trying to make, but as he was a very reticent man I did not expect to receive more than a grunt in reply. To my surprise, however, he picked up one of his tools and sketched roughly on the floor of the workshop the part of a lathe which was clear enough even for me, quite a layman in these matters, to understand. He then explained that he first intended to make a lathe which he would use, in turn, to make other things with my permission.

Not having the remotest idea what he had in mind, but being quite pleased that we had so clever a mechanic among the ruffians we had as prisoners, I gave him permission right away to go ahead with the other things he wished to make. This possibly encouraged him, as a day or two later he came to me and

said not to feel afraid that he would try to escape as he would lose too much that way. He hoped, with my help, to achieve his life's ambition. He had said more than I had ever known him to say before, so I knew nothing more would be got from him until another favourable opportunity.

I CONTINUED my duties as usual. Whenever I visited the dormitory at nights I observed Ghulam Akbar Khan working energetically on some bit of iron. He smiled now, however, when I passed: his work had made him happier. In the workshop there were several other mechanics older and with more experience than Ghulam Akbar Khan, but none appeared to know so much about the work as he did. The others paid him a certain amount of respect—that is, such respect as a Pathan tribesman can pay anyone. I told him I would put him in charge of the workshop. He just smiled, but said nothing. He had made himself both inside and outside calipers for measuring the inside and outside of cylindrical objects. He had also made an iron rule divided into sixteenths of an inch.

The lathe was now about finished, but the truing-up process had still to be done. As this would take much time, according to Ghulam Akbar Khan, he asked to take parts to bed with him. Since he had not asked for the shackle that secured his leg to the iron rod attached to his bed to be removed, I wondered how he intended to work at his job.

Walking into the dormitory as usual, I noticed Ghulam Akbar Khan lying in a most awkward position. His shackled leg was outside the bunk, but bent towards the iron rod, his body was in a sort of crouching attitude, and he was diligently rubbing an oilstone over a part of the lathe. I asked what he was doing, and he made it clear that he was trying to make one part of his lathe fit more accurately into another, which it would not do if not given this attention. I wished him luck and carried on to complete the rest of my round. As I walked along, it occurred to me that Ghulam Akbar Khan must be doing with a minimum of sleep these nights: still, if he felt interested in the work and was happy at it, there was really no occasion to do anything about it.

NO relatives or interested friends ever came to see Ghulam Akbar Khan on visiting-

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days as far as I knew, so I asked him if he had no relations. He replied sadly that the old folk had passed away and he had no one else. Here was a man without relatives, hobbies, or, so it seemed to me, other distractions of any kind: he lived only for his job. I thought it might be a good time to learn a little more about his life's ambition.

His usually bright eyes grew brighter still as he replied: 'We Pathans are poor, but pride and prestige counts more with us than it generally does with folk of our means.' Then he went on: 'The possession of a rifle gives the owner much prestige. But we are poor—we have not the means to purchase expensive rifles, so we attempt by theft to get them.' It was evident that he was in a talkative mood. 'I have never murdered anyone in my life,' he continued, 'but in trying to borrow the sentry's rifle when he was off duty a raid occurred, the sentry was knifed, and I was arrested. You know the rest.'

'That may be so,' I replied, 'but what has that to do with your life's ambition?'

'In this country we can buy only British-made rifles, which are too expensive for us, so we try to steal them. But if we could make them here they would be much cheaper.'

I began to see daylight. 'Your life's ambition, then,' I said 'is to flood your country with home-made rifles, a number made by you personally.'

He smiled in assent.

I considered the idea a minute or two, then tried to get out of him just what benefit his ambition could possibly yield him in view of his life sentence. What he should do, I suggested, was to appeal for a retrial and if it were granted, and if he could prove his case of not guilty, it might be possible to do something for him.

He had now been five years in prison. He appealed for a retrial, at which he stated what he had always maintained, and witnesses substantiated his statement. The jail authorities reported favourably on his character and after further inquiries Ghulam Akbar Khan's sentence was lifted.

THOUGH Ghulam Akbar Khan was free now to go home, he asked to be allowed to stay in prison until he completed his job. He was granted this privilege and was much pleased, as he really had no home to go to and in a sense was better off in prison.

Turning to his job again, he started on the barrel of the rifle. Selecting an old car-axle, he started, with special drills that he had made, to bore a hole right through the centre and then cut off the required length. He next turned his attention to the bolt and trigger mechanism, but asked for the loan of a workshop sentry's rifle to copy the mechanism.

In due course the rifle was completed. I laid it on the floor and then calling a sentry I placed his rifle alongside of it, and if it had not been for the Government number on the sentry's one I would not have been able to distinguish one from the other.

His job finished, it was now time for Ghulam Akbar Khan to leave the jail. He came to my office to say good-bye and thank me in his own crude way for kindness received. I let him take his rifle away. It was, after all, the only thing he had lived and worked for during the years he spent in prison. I never saw him again and therefore cannot say whether his ambition ever entirely materialised—but later a large factory for the manufacture of rifles was started in tribal territory and is a going concern to-day.

Unending

*Before you were born or thought of,
The sun shone in the sky;
Before I was born or thought of,
The moon gave light on high.*

*The rivers and the seas were there
And night-time followed day,
The hills all stood where they are now
Some million years away.*

*Before we met, the Future was,
The Past had yet to be;
The Present is our heritage
For all eternity.*

CONST/NCE A. McFADYEAN.

Science at Your Service

AN IMPROVED ELECTRIC-BULB

A LEADING producer of electric-lighting bulbs has introduced a 200 watt bulb with the same diameter as 150 watt bulbs. This is a development that should prove useful in many household and commercial circumstances, for hitherto bulbs of higher lighting power than the 150 watt standard have been larger and therefore not as suitable for many fittings. The only restriction is that these new bulbs should not be used for replacing 150 watt bulbs in enclosed fittings which have been designed for the 150 watt standard. The 200 watt bulbs are being manufactured in clear, pearl, and silver-white finish.

POLYTHENE FABRICS

The remarkable synthetic, polyethylene or polythene, is widely known for its appearances in the shape of domestic utensils, packaging film or sheet, etc. It is not as well known that polythene can be extruded as yarn and that the yarn can be spun into new textiles with unusual properties. A major application is for making protective clothing for workers handling troublesome chemicals—polythene has exceptional resistance to chemical attack at normal temperatures. Polythene fabrics are also used in industrial filtration, and here again chemical resistance, and also bacterial resistance, give it important advantages. Ropes, twines, and cords are being made from polythene yarns. Their strength cannot be compared with that of hemp or nylon ropes, but in certain conditions other properties become more important. Polythene is lighter than water and it repels water; polythene ropes are buoyant, therefore, and do not become heavy through water saturation. For air-to-sea rescue work polythene life-lines are particularly suitable. For light duty work involving constant immersion or water-contact—e.g., mooring smaller boats—polythene ropes retain flexibility and do not deteriorate. As furnishing fabrics, polythene-woven materials are being developed for chair upholstery and for deck-chairs; for the latter, the natural rot-proof and damp-proof qualities

are excellent. Insoles, or what many people call 'socks', for fitting inside shoes or boots, are being made from polythene-woven fabric; a multi-layered construction provides a zone of air between foot and leather. At present the soles are being used only in the Services, but they are likely to be placed on the civilian market as well. The uses of polythene described and others no less novel are all recent in development. Detailed information about products now available on the market cannot yet be given, but an increasing appearance of polythene textile products in shops can be anticipated.

COPIES WITHOUT CARBON

Perfect copies of typed or handwritten scripts without the use of the time-honoured interleaved carbon papers seem too revolutionary to be true, but in the United States a new emulsion-coated paper is making this possible. In a very short time sales of this paper have risen to 1000 tons a month. The process is the result of ten years' research by an American company whose main interests are in the office-machinery field. The sheets of paper are simply placed together one under another either for ordinary writing or typing; the impression on the top copy by the pen or type is sufficient to produce a similar effect on the front surfaces of all the sheets. There is naturally a limit to the number of perfect or good copies that can be produced in the one operation. For pen impressions this limit is 6, for ordinary typing 8, and for electric typing up to 12. The new method of simultaneous reproduction is unlikely, therefore, to compete with duplicators.

The new paper will become available in this country during this year. A British plant is already producing the emulsion and the coated paper will probably be manufactured by several firms. The introduction of this new project will be controlled by the British sister-company of the U.S. firm that has successfully pioneered it in America. The paper seems likely to be generally known as NCR (for 'No Carbon Required').

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EASIER FRYING

Two variations in frying-pan design will be most useful in the smaller family household or in a house where breakfasting times differ. One design divides the circular pan into three equisized sections, enabling three different foods to be cooked at the same time—e.g., bacon, egg, sausage. The other variation has a rectangular shape, and although the frying space is also divided into three sections, one of these is twice the size of the other two; in addition, this larger pan has a side drainer. Both pans are made of heavy-gauge aluminium and are fitted with black plastics heat-resistant handles. The former, smaller, frying-pan has been thoroughly tested in use by the writer, and it has relegated a previously used conventional frying-pan into disuse.

PLASTICS COLLARS

The old indiarubber white collar was often a cause of scorn as well as a source of economy, but its modern version manufactured from plastics is being considerably worn to-day. Its virtues are seldom recognised, since it succeeds by being inconspicuously different from a normal semi-stiff white collar. Several years of research with plastics materials in various forms enabled a London firm to produce a white collar of excellent appearance, even to the final detail of a linen-weave impression on the outer surface. The plastics material used has non-creasing properties, so the collars are also non-creasing and non-curling at the frontal edges. They are washable without any of the usual laundering requirements. A cold-water wash after wear is sufficient, and the collar, after drying with a rough towel, is again ready for wear. Ironing is never required. For this reason in particular the collars are being increasingly used by business-men who have to travel frequently. One collar will last for six weeks' constant wear, provided it is washed in this simple way whenever necessary—and the saving of the usual laundry charge per collar-wash over a six weeks' period amounts to a sum in considerable excess of the price of one of these plastics collars. If a quick wash-and-dry treatment is required, it can be given in about a minute.

The collars are made in three styles and all the usual neck-sizes. In addition to making white semi-stiff collars for civilian wear, the manufacturers are also making blue plastics collars for police services.

ADHESIVE VERSUS NEEDLE

An adhesive specially designed for use with fabrics is certainly something new. The manufacturers claim that its use saves hours of sewing. It is quick-drying, and types of task for which it is suitable are binding coccomatting, binding carpet-ends, carpet-joining, making pelmets, mending sacks or tents, repairing car upholstery, turning up hems, fixing name-tabs to clothes, patching umbrellas, etc. Very little of the adhesive—a white thickish liquid—is required, and after application with a brush to both surfaces it should be allowed to develop tackiness before the surfaces are pressed together. More liberal applications are required for sticking such materials as linoleum or carpet. A special use is in giving mats or rugs a non-slip undersurface; the adhesive is allowed to dry, and it is claimed that the mat will not slip after this treatment, or that damp-rag treatment will restore the non-slip property if after a time the mat begins to slip again. It can also be used in home-weaving for joining wool or strings, so eliminating knots. A small booklet provided with jars of this adhesive describes a much wider variety of uses than those mentioned here. In addition, the material functions as an excellent general-purpose adhesive; its suitability for fabric-joining in no sense limits its other applications. Here is yet another example of the great improvement in adhesives brought about by modern chemistry. A generation or so ago the range of adhesives was very small.

AN EGG-DISPENSER

This is the actual name given to a new larger-storage rack for eggs, though it is perhaps slightly misleading. It is a double-tiered rack, and in both tiers eggs may be placed side by side; the tiers have a slight slope, so that when an egg is removed for use the remaining eggs in the tier move gently downwards. By this means eggs are used in a first-in first-out sequence. The need to mark eggs or to move them from separate compartments in a sectional container is eliminated. This neat piece of kitchen equipment is strongly made of metal heavily covered with plastics. The design has been approved by the Council of Industrial Design. Dimensions are, approximately, 14 inches long, 3½ inches deep, almost 4 inches high. Various colours are available—white, primrose, eau de nil, red, and blue. The price is very reasonable.

SCIENCE AT YOUR SERVICE

A FLOOR MOP AND POLISHER

A new mop can be enthusiastically commended. The yarn head is impregnated with a dust-absorbing and polishing agent. The top plate holding the mop-head is of doubled construction, but as it is made of lightweight anodised aluminium this does not make the mop heavy to carry or use. The handle is swivel-connected, giving maximum working-range from any position. During polishing, weight is evenly distributed over the entire mop-head, so that similar efficiency to hand-polishing is obtained. The mop will reach under furniture or into awkward corners. The handle, approximately 4 feet long, is supplied attached to the mop-head. The same company also offers a similarly constructed mop with an unimpregnated yarn mop-head. However, the difference in price is small, a few shillings only, and the superior polishing quality of the treated mop-head would seem to offer much better value. A plastics cover for the mop-head is provided; this assists retention of the impregnated dust-absorbing agent when the mop is not in use. The yarn head is easily removed for washing, and it can be reimpregnated when necessary. Although it is not the custom of this feature to mention prices of articles described, it seems only fair in this case to say that the mop in its impregnated version and including the plastics cover costs a little under £1.

JET-PLANE NOISE

The noise made by jet-aircraft has created human problems that need little emphasis. Local complaints in towns close to aerodromes are frequently made. The problem is more serious than that of the occasionally broken sound-barrier, although this may on occasions cause structural damage to buildings. Yet the irritations suffered by communities living near aerodromes or in areas where jet-aircraft fly frequently are small compared to these encountered at the aerodromes themselves. Recently an American authority working on defence research has admitted that modern jet-planes are noisy to the point of being beyond the endurance of

human ears. As is now fairly well known, sound intensity can be measured in decibels. Traffic noise at a busy corner has a rating of 80 decibels; a boiler-making factory, often regarded as the noisiest example of industry, has a rating of 100 decibels. It is generally reckoned that any noise above 120 decibels in intensity produces pain; levels of 140 decibels are intolerable to the average ear; and noises of 160-170 decibels are greater in intensity than people can stand. Yet many jet-aircraft now in use are producing at points near their take-off noise of about 130 decibels intensity. The same authority stated that new planes at the drawing-board stage of creation will produce noise at above the level of 160-170 decibels! There is scarcely any scientific knowledge about the effects of exposure to this level of noise, not even whether the deafness likely to be induced will be permanent or temporary. The advance of technology in one direction without similar advancement in other consequent directions seems unusually dangerous. The difficulty of finding any solution or remedy could hardly be emphasised more than by the suggestion made, by the same authority, that in future totally deaf people may have to be employed on ground duties at airfields where jet-planes are used.

ARTISTIC PANS

Exhibited this year for the first time, a set of saucepans and frying-pan attracted considerable attention for their shape and colourful appearance. Designed by a well-known Italian expert, they have set a new standard in kitchen equipment fashion. They are made from 14-gauge aluminium and have exceptional polish on both inside and outside surfaces. The non-chip lids are coloured, made from anodised aluminium, in red, green, blue, or copper. These also have a high polish. The handles are plastics-constructed, heat-resisting, and have finger-grip design. The saucepans are rounded and streamlined. Good construction and good appearance are combined in this set of kitchenware, which would make a most attractive wedding-present.

TO CORRESPONDENTS who wish fuller information regarding new inventions, publications, etc. mentioned here, addressees will be furnished, when possible, if (and only if) a stamped addressed envelope or postcard for a reply be sent to the Editor, *Chambers's Journal*, 11 Thistle Street, Edinburgh. To avoid delays, requests of this kind from correspondents abroad will be forwarded to the manufacturer or agent if stamps, postal orders, or imperial or international reply coupons are enclosed for the purpose. The issue of the *Journal* and the heading of the paragraph in which the object of inquiry is described should be given in order to facilitate reference.

Summer Vegetable-Sowing

IT is possible during June and July to make sowings of vegetables which will give good crops during the autumn and winter. To do this, the early-maturing varieties are chosen, and thus it is making spring sowings all over again. It is very useful to be able to pull young fresh carrots in September. The large main-crop carrots may be a standby during the winter, but young carrots will certainly be much appreciated by everyone, for they have a far better flavour and texture. A supply of delicious young roots may be obtained if a sowing is made about the third week of July and another at the end of the first week of August. You can't be too particular about dates, but the idea is to use the land that has been well manured for a previous crop.

All that needs to be done is to give a dressing of a fish fertiliser at 5 oz. to the square yard and to fork this in lightly. After this forking, it may possibly be necessary to tread or give a light rolling to break down the lumps, and this will be followed by the usual raking to produce the fine tilth. On this well-prepared firm soil drills should be got out one foot apart and as shallow as half-an-inch. The seed must be sown thinly, and a simple way of doing this is to use powdered peat as a carrier. It should be mixed with the seed at the rate of three to one. Choose early-maturing varieties, like Scarlet Model and Early Gem.

It is quite true to say that runner-beans may go on cropping until they are cut by the frost in October, but French-beans are sometimes preferred, especially the stringless varieties, like Stringless Refugee. The pods in this case need only be topped and tailed, and this saves a tremendous lot of time in the kitchen. Make a sowing during the first week of June, and another one, if necessary, early in July. Once again, choose a piece of land that has grown an earlier crop, and so there will be little need to spend a long time on the preparation of the ground. Give the fish fertiliser about 3 oz. to the square yard. Make the rows 2 feet 6 inches apart and the drills 3 inches deep. If the land is very sandy and lacking in humus, some sedge-peat may be added down the drills before the seeds are placed into position, 7

inches apart. Rake over lightly and then with the rake-head firm over the actual beans.

Peas are another pulse crop which could be included, and a sowing may be made in the second week of June and the first week of July. Choose early-maturing varieties again, like Kelvedon Wonder or Witham Wonder. Sow them in rows 18 inches apart at least, and space the seed out about 3 inches apart in the rows. With peas make sure that the plants get plenty of water in a dry spell.

Do not forget the importance of lettuce. Small batches may be sown every three weeks from the beginning of June right until the end of August. The seed should be put in $\frac{1}{2}$ inch deep. Thin out the cabbage lettuce to 9 inches apart and the cos lettuce and iceberg varieties to a foot apart. For an iceberg variety I can strongly recommend Webb's Wonderful.

Spinach is another crop which may be sown, choosing a variety like New Giant Thick Leaved, and in this case the rows should be 14 inches apart and the plants should be thinned out to 4 inches apart. Spinach is inclined to go to seed very quickly unless there is sufficient moisture in the ground, so use the sedge-peat as advised for lettuces, or apply finely-divided compost instead. Spinach-beet is a useful standby for the winter, because it is a perpetual type. Make a sowing about the third week of July, with the rows 15 inches apart and the plants thinned out to 8 inches apart later on. Pull this spinach any time right the way through the winter. Remove the stems with the leaves.

Varieties of turnips, like Chirk Castle and Snowball, are quite hardy. A sowing can be made about the end of June, and another about the end of July. Often the tops or leaves can be used as a vegetable in addition to the root, and so nothing is wasted. The turnip family is subject to club-root, and therefore it is wise to apply lime. The drills should be 10 inches apart. Thin down to having the plants 6 inches apart in the rows.

I shall be glad to help readers with their gardening problems. Write to me through the Editor, kindly enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for the reply.

W. E. SHEWELL-COOPER, M.B.E., N.D.H.

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Printed in Great Britain by T. & A. CONSTABLE LTD., Edinburgh.

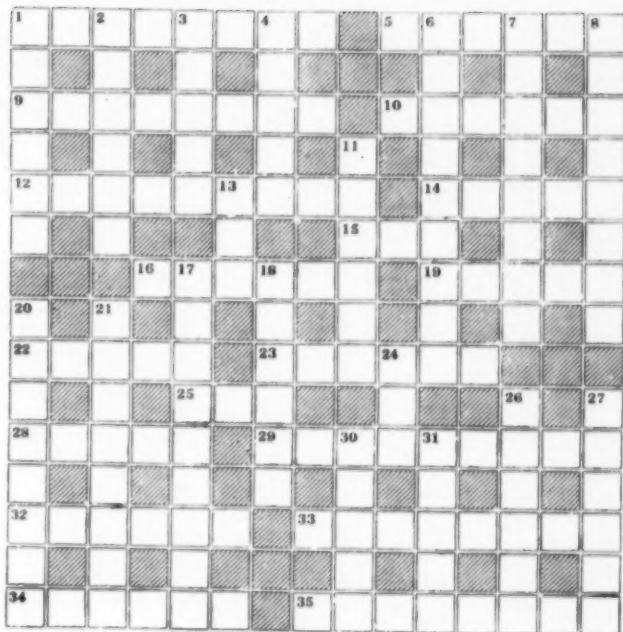
Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, LTD., 11 Thistle Street, Edinburgh E, and 6 Dean Street, London, W.1.

CHAMBERS'S DICTIONARY

CROSSWORD No. 23

ACROSS

- 1 An Edinburgh annual (8).
- 5 Imperial if born to it (6).
- 9 French husband with time to be at sea (8).
- 10 Witness—at a cricket match? (6).
- 12 Horseman associated with Westerns and the Range (two words: 4,5).
- 14 Insanity, presumably not of women (5).
- 15 Constricting neckwear (3).
- 16 Ravel the origin of this jacket (6).
- 19 A hundred following a confused night in Paris for this garment (5).
- 22 A backward idiot keeps apart (5).
- 23 Ladies only out East (6).
- 25 Put down yourself (3).
- 28 Could this ecclesiastical officer bearer be young? (5).
- 29 Such repayments could be in one's own coin (9).
- 32 Partnership ending owl-ishly (6).
- 33 He may be a stick and dark, at that, but he ushers the way (8).
- 34 Permanently and in every manner (6).
- 35 This month mixed with insolent content butts in (8).



Composed by JOAN BENTON

DOWN

- 1 Allowance is made for it (6).
- 2 To be kept on this is tame (6).
- 3 Bury between (5).
- 4 Help round self is directed (5).
- 6 I maul mutt (Anag. 9).
- 7 Arranging, as birds of a feather may do (8).
- 8 Fascinating door (8).
- 11 This sylvan retreat is the cockney's shelter (6).
- 13 You write the reverse of well (3).
- 17 Tender Right Wing collection (9).

DOWN (contd).

- 18 Urge strongly (6).
- 20 Reasonable port (8).
- 21 Streets in what manner divided anew for touring revue (two words: 4,4).
- 24 With which to hear and most of it, too (8).
- 26 Is the pub Russian, striped or forbidden? (6).
- 27 'Methinks I hear footsteps' is one of these (6).
- 30 No telegraph boy, but carries the cable (5).
- 31 Suffer to be inside a dog (5).

Three prizes of book tokens to the value of ten shillings and sixpence each will be awarded to the senders of the first correct solutions opened.

Entries must arrive not later than the 15th June.

Envelopes should be clearly marked **CROSSWORD** in the top left-hand corner. The closing date unavoidably confines the entry to those resident in Great Britain, N. Ireland and Eire.

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